REV. JOHN G. HENRY.
CINCINNATI, OHIO.

John G. Henry.

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SERMON I.

THE STORY OF GOD'S MIGHTY ACTS.

"We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what work thou didst in their days in the times of old."—PSALM xliv. 1.

PERHAPS there are no stories that stick by us so long as those which we hear in our childhood, those tales which are told us by our fathers, and in our nurseries. It is a sad reflection that too many of these stories are idle and vain, so that our minds in early infancy are tinctured with fables, and inoculated with strange and lying narratives. Now, among the early Christians and the old believers in the far-off times nursery tales were far different from what they are now, and the stories with which their children were amused were of a far different class from those which fascinated us in the days of our babyhood. No doubt Abraham would talk to young children about the flood, and tell them how the waters overspread the earth, and how Noah alone was saved in the ark. The ancient Israelites, when they dwelt in their own land, would all of them tell their children about the Red Sea, and the plagues which God wrought in Egypt when he brought his people out of the house of bondage. Among the early Christians we know that it was the custom of parents to recount to their children every thing concerning the life of Christ, the acts of the Apostles, and the like interesting narratives. Nay, among our puritanic ancestors, such were the stories that regaled their childhood. Sitting down by the fireside, before those old Dutch tiles with the quaint eccentric drawings upon them of the history of Christ, mothers would teach their children about Jesus walking on the water, or of his multiplying the loaves of bread, or of his marvellous transfiguration,

or of the crucifixion of Jesus. Oh, how I would that the like were the tales of the present age, that the stories of our childhood would be again the stories of Christ, and that we would each of us believe that, after all, there can be nothing so interesting as that which is true, and nothing more striking than those stories which are written in sacred writ; nothing that can more truly move the heart of a child than the marvellous works of God which he did in the olden times. Now, it seems that the psalmist who wrote this most musical ode had heard from his father, handed to him by tradition, the stories of the wondrous things which God had done in his day; and afterwards, this sweet singer in Israel taught it to his children, and so was one generation after another led to call God blessed, remembering his mighty acts.

Now, my dear friends, this morning I intend to recall to your minds some of the wondrous things which God has done in the olden time. My aim and object will be to excite your minds to seek after the like, that, looking back upon what God has done, you may be induced to look forward with the eye of expectation, hoping that he will again stretch forth his potent hand and his holy arm, and repeat those mighty acts he performed in ancient days.

First, I shall speak of *the marvellous stories which our fathers have told us, and which we have heard of the olden time;* secondly, I shall mention *some disadvantages under which these old stories labor with regard to the effect upon our minds;* and, then, I shall *draw the proper inferences from those marvellous things which we have heard that the Lord did in days of yore.*

I. To begin, then, with THE WONDERFUL STORIES WE HAVE HEARD OF THE LORD'S ANCIENT DOINGS.

We have heard that God has at times done very mighty acts. The plain every-day course of the world hath been disturbed with wonders at which men have been exceedingly amazed. God hath not always permitted his church to go on climbing by slow degrees to victory, but he hath been pleased at times to smite one terrible blow, and lay his enemies down upon the earth, and bid his children march over their prostrate bodies. Turn ye back, then, to ancient records, and remember what God hath

done. Will ye not remember what he did at the Red Sea, how he smote Egypt and all its chivalry, and covered Pharaoh's chariot and horse in the Red Sea? Have ye not heard tell how God smote Og, king of Bashan, and Sihon, king of the Amorites, because they withstood the progress of his people? Have ye not learned how he proved that his mercy endureth for ever when he slew those great kings and cast the mighty ones down from their thrones? Have you not read, too, how God smote the children of Canaan, and drove out the inhabitants thereof, and gave the land to his people, to be a possession by lot for ever? Have you not heard how when the hosts of Jabin came against them, the stars in their courses fought against Sisera? The river of Kishon swept them away, "that ancient river, the river Kishon," and there was none of them left? Hath it not been told you, too, how by the hand of David, God smote the Philistines, and how by his right hand he smote the children of Ammon? Have you not heard how Midian was put to confusion, and the myriads of Arabia were scattered by Asa in the day of his faith? And have ye not heard, too, how the Lord sent a blast upon the hosts of Sennacherib, so that in the morning they were all dead men? Tell—tell ye these, his wonders! Speak of them in your streets. Teach them to your children. Let them not be forgotten, for the right hand of the Lord hath done marvellous things, his name is known in all the earth.

The wonders, however, which most concern us, are those of the Christian era; and surely these are not second to those under the Old Testament. Have you never read how God won to himself great renown on the Day of Pentecost? Turn ye to this book of the record of the wonders of the Lord and read. Peter the fisherman stood up and preached in the name of the Lord his God. A multitude assembled, and the Spirit of God fell upon them; and it came to pass that three thousand in one day were pricked in their hearts by the hand of God, and believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. And know you not how the twelve apostles with the disciples went everywhere preaching the Word, and the idols fell from their thrones? The cities opened wide their gates, and the messenger of Christ walked through the street and preached. It is true that at first they were driven hither and

thither, and hunted like partridges upon the mountains: but do ye not remember how the Lord did get unto himself a victory, so that in a hundred years after the nailing of Christ to the cross the gospel had been preached in every nation, and the isles of the sea had heard the sound thereof? And have ye yet forgotten how the heathen were baptized, thousands at a time, in every river? What stream is there in Europe that cannot testify to the majesty of the gospel? What city is there in the land that cannot tell how God's truth has triumphed, and how the heathen has forsaken his false god, and bowed his knee to Jesus the crucified? The first spread of the gospel is a miracle never to be eclipsed. Whatever God may have done at the Red Sea, he hath done still more within a hundred years after the time when Christ first came into the world. It seemed as if a fire from heaven ran along the ground. Nothing could resist its force. The lightning shaft of truth shivered every pinnacle of the idol temple, and Jesus was worshipped from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same.

This is one of the things we have heard of the olden times.

And have ye never heard of the mighty things which God did by preachers some hundreds of years from that date? Hath it not been told you concerning Chrysostom, the golden-mouthed, how, whenever he preached, the church was thronged with attentive hearers; and there, standing and lifting up holy hands, he spake with a majesty unparalleled, the Word of God in truth and righteousness; the people listening, hanging forward to catch every word, and anon breaking the silence with the clapping of their hands and the stamping of their feet; then silent again for awhile, spell-bound by the mighty orator; and anon carried away with enthusiasm, springing to their feet, clapping their hands, and shouting for joy again? Numberless were the conversions in his day: God was exceedingly magnified, for sinners were abundantly saved. And have your fathers never told you of the wondrous things that were done afterwards when the black darkness of superstition covered the earth, when Popery sat upon her ebon throne and stretched her iron rod across the nations and shut the windows of heaven, and quenched the very stars of God and made thick darkness cover the people? Have

ye never heard how Martin Luther arose and preached the gospel of the grace of God, and how the nations trembled, and the world heard the voice of God and lived? Have ye not heard of Zwingle among the Swiss, and of Calvin in the holy city of Geneva, and of the mighty works that God did by them? Nay, as Britons, have ye forgotten the mighty preacher of the truth—have your ears ceased to tingle with the wondrous tale of the preachers that Wickliffe sent forth into every market town and every hamlet of England, preaching the gospel of God? Oh, doth not history tell us that these men were like firebrands in the midst of the dry stubble; that their voice was as the roaring of a lion, and their going forth like the springing of a young lion? Their glory was as the firstling of a bullock; they did push the nation before them, and as for the enemies, they said, "Destroy them." None could stand before them, for the Lord their God had girded them with might.

To come down a little nearer to our own times, truly our fathers have told us the wondrous things which God did in the days of Wesley and of Whitfield. The churches were all asleep. Irreligion was the rule of the day. The very streets seemed to run with iniquity, and the gutters were filled full with the iniquity of sin. Up rose Whitfield and Wesley, men whose hearts the Lord had touched, and they dared to preach the gospel of the grace of God. Suddenly, as in a moment, there was heard the rush as of wings, and the church said, "Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?" They come! they come! numberless as the birds of heaven, with a rushing, like mighty winds that are not to be withstood. Within a few years, from the preaching of these two men, England was permeated with evangelical truth. The Word of God was known in every town, and there was scarcely a hamlet into which the Methodists had not penetrated. In those days of the slow-coach, when Christianity seemed to have bought up the old wagons in which our fathers once travelled,—where business runs with steam, there oftentimes religion creeps along with its belly on the earth: we are astonished at these tales, and we think them wonders. Yet let us believe them; they come to us as substantial matters of history. And the wondrous things which God did in the olden

times, by his grace he will yet do again. He that is mighty hath done great things and holy is his name.

There is a special feature to which I would call your attention with regard to the works of God in the olden time; they derive increasing interest and wonder from the fact that they were all sudden things. The old stagers in our churches believe that things must grow, gently, by degrees; we must go step by step onward. Concentrated action and continued labor, they say, will ultimately bring success. But the marvel is, all God's works have been sudden. When Peter stood up to preach, it did not take six weeks to convert the three thousand. They were converted at once, and baptized that very day; they were that hour turned to God, and became as truly disciples of Christ as they could have been if their conversion had taken seventy years. So was it in the day of Martin Luther: it did not take Luther centuries to break through the thick darkness of Rome. God lit the candle, and the candle burned, and there was light in an instant. God works suddenly. If any one could have stood in Wurtemburg, and have said, "Can Popery be made to quail, can the Vatican be made to shake?" The answer would have been:— "No; it will take at least a thousand years to do it. Popery, the great serpent, hath so twisted itself about the nations, and bound them so fast in its coil, that they cannot be delivered except by a long process." "Not so," however, did God say. He smote the dragon sorely, and the nations went free; he cut the gates of brass, and broke in sunder the bars of iron, and the people were delivered in an hour. Freedom came not in the course of years, but in an instant. The people that walked in darkness saw a great light, and upon them that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, did the light shine. So was it in Whitfield's day. The rebuking of a slumbering church was not the work of ges; it was done at once. Have ye never heard of the great evival under Whitfield? Take as an instance that at Camslang. He was preaching in the churchyard to a great congregation, that could not get into any edifice; and while preaching, the power of God came upon the people, and one after another fell down as if they were smitten; and at least it was estimated that not less than three thousand persons were crying out at one

time under the conviction of sin. He preached on, now thundering like Boanerges, and then comforting like Barnabas, and the work spread, and no tongue can tell the great things that God did under that one sermon of Whitfield. Not even the sermon of Peter on the Day of Pentecost was equal to it.

So has it been in all revivals; God's work has been done suddenly. As with a clap of thunder has God descended from on nigh, not slowly, but on cherubim right royally doth he ride; on the wings of the mighty wind does he fly. Sudden has been the work; men could scarce believe it true, it was done in so short a space of time. Witness the great revival which is going on in and around Belfast. After carefully looking at the matter, and after seeing some trusty and well-beloved brother who lived in that neighborhood, I am convinced, notwithstanding what enemies may say, that it is a genuine work of grace, and that God is doing wonders there. A friend, who called to see me yesterday, tells me, that the lowest and vilest men, the most depraved females in Belfast have been visited with this extraordinary epilepsy, as the world calls it; but with this strange rushing of the Spirit, as we have it. Men who have been drunkards have suddenly felt an impulse compelling them to pray. They have resisted; they have sought to their cups in order to put it out; but when they have been swearing, seeking to quench the Spirit by their blasphemy, God has at last brought them on their knees, and they have been compelled to cry for mercy with piercing shrieks, and to agonize in prayer; and then, after a time, the Evil one seems to have been cast out of them, and in a quiet, holy, happy frame of mind, they have made a profession of their faith in Christ, and have walked in his fear and love. Roman Catholics have been converted. I thought that an extraordinary thing; but they have been converted very frequently indeed in Ballymena and in Belfast. In fact, I am told the priests are now selling small bottles of holy water for people to take, in order that they may be preserved from this desperate contagion of the Holy Spirit. This holy water is said to have such efficacy, that those who do not attend any of the meetings are not likely to be meddled with by the Holy Spirit—so the priests tell them. But if they go to the meetings, even this holy water cannot preserve

them—they are as liable to fall a prey to the Divine influence. I think they are just as likely to do so without as with it. All this has been brought about suddenly, and although we may expect to find some portion of *natural* excitement, yet, I am persuaded, it is in the main a real, *spiritual*, and an abiding work. There is a little froth on the surface, but there is a deep running current that is not to be resisted, sweeping underneath, and carrying every thing before it. At least, there is something to waken our interest, when we understand that in the small town of Ballymena on market day, the publicans have always taken one hundred pounds for whiskey, and now they cannot take a sovereign all day long in all the public houses. Men who were once drunkards now meet for prayer, and people after hearing one sermon will not go until the minister has preached another, and sometimes a third; and at last he is obliged to say, "You must go, I am exhausted." Then they will break up into groups in their streets and in their houses, crying out to God to let this mighty work spread, that sinners may be converted unto him. "Well," says one, "we cannot believe it." Very likely you cannot, but some of us can, for we have heard it with our ears, and our fathers have told us the mighty works that God did in their days, and we are prepared to believe that God can do the like works now.

I must here remark again, in all these old stories there is one very plain feature. Whenever God has done a mighty work it has been by some very insignificant instrument. When he slew Goliath it was by little David, who was but a ruddy youth. Lay not up the sword of Goliath—I always thought that a mistake of David—lay up not Goliath's sword, but lay up the stone and treasure up the sling in God's armory for ever. When God would slay Sisera, it was a woman that must do it with a hammer and a nail. God has done his mightiest works by the meanest instruments: that is a fact most true of all God's works. Peter the fisherman at Pentecost, Luther the humble monk at the Reformation, Whitfield the potboy of the Old Bell Inn at Gloucester in the time of the last century's revival; and so it must be to the end. God works not by Pharaoh's horses or chariot, but he works by Moses' rod; he doth not his wonders

with the whirlwind and the storm; he doth them by the still small voice, that the glory may be his and the honor all his own. Doth not this open a field of encouragement to you and to me? Why may not we be employed in doing some mighty work for God here? Moreover, we have noticed in all these stories of God's mighty works in the olden time, that wherever he has done any great thing it has been by some one who has had very grea faith. I do verily believe at this moment that, if God willed it, every soul in this hall would be converted now. If God chose to put out the operations of his own mighty Spirit, not the most ob durate heart would be able to stand against it. "He will have mercy upon whom he will have mercy." He will do as he pleases; none can stay his hand. "Well," says one, "but I do not expect to see any great things." Then, my dear friend, you will not be disappointed, for you will not see them; but those that expect them *shall* see them. Men of great faith do great things. It was Elijah's faith that slew the priests of Baal. If he had had the little heart that some of you have, Baal's priests had still ruled over the people, and would never have been smitten with the sword. It was Elijah's faith that bade him say, "If the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him." And again, "Choose one bullock for yourselves, cut it in pieces, lay it on wood and put no fire under, call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of Jehovah." It was his noble faith that bade him say, "Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape;" and he brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there—a holocaust to God. The reason why God's name was so magnified was because Elijah's faith in God was so mighty and heroic. When the Pope sent his bull to Luther, Luther burned it. Standing up in the midst of the crowd, with the blazing paper in his hand, he said, "See here, this is the Pope's bull." What cared he for all the Popes that were eve. n or out of hell? And when he went to Worms to meet the grand Diet, his followers said, "You are in danger, stand back.' 'No," said Luther, "if there were as many devils in Worms as there are tiles on the roofs of the houses, I would not fear; I will go;" and into Worms he went, confident in the Lord his God. It was the same with Whitfield; he believed and he expected

that God would do great things. When he went into his pulpit he believed that God would bless the people, and God did so. Little faith may do little things, but great faith shall be greatly honored. O God! our fathers have told us this, that whenever they had great faith thou hast always honored it by doing mighty works.

I will detain you no longer on this point, except to make one observation. All the mighty works of God have been attended with great prayer, as well as with great faith. Have ye ever heard of the commencement of the great American revival? A man, unknown and obscure, laid it up in his heart to pray that God would bless his country. After praying and wrestling and making the soul-stirring inquiry, "Lord, what wilt thou have *me* to do? Lord, what wilt thou have me *to do?*" he hired a room, and put up an announcement that there would be a prayer-meeting held there at such-and-such an hour of the day. He went at the proper hour, and there was not a single person there; he began to pray, and prayed for half an hour alone. One came in at the end of the half hour, and then two more, and I think he closed with six. The next week came round, and there might have been fifty dropped in at different times. At last the prayer-meeting grew to a hundred; then others began to start prayer-meetings; at last there was scarcely a street in New York that was without a prayer-meeting. Merchants found time to run in, in the middle of the day, to pray. The prayer-meetings became daily ones, lasting for about an hour; petitions and requests were sent up: these were simply asked and offered before God, and the answers came; and many were the happy hearts that stood up and testified that the prayer offered last week had been already fulfilled. Then it was when they were all earnest in prayer, suddenly the Spirit of God fell upon the people, and it was rumored that in certain village a preacher had been preaching in thorough earnest, and there had been hundreds converted in a week. The matter spread into and through the Northern States. These revivals of religion became universal, and it has been sometimes said, that a quarter of a million of people were converted to God through the short space of two or three months. Now the same effect was produced in Ballymena and Belfast by the same means.

The brother thought that it lay at his heart to pray, and he did pray; then he held a regular prayer-meeting; day after day they met together to entreat the blessing, and the fire descended and the work was done. Sinners were converted, not by ones or twos, but by hundreds and thousands, and the Lord's name was greatly magnified by the progress of his gospel. Beloved, I am only telling you *facts*. Make each of you your own estimate of them if you please.

II. Agreeably to my division, I have now to make a few observations upon THE DISADVANTAGES UNDER WHICH THESE OLD STORIES FREQUENTLY LABOR. When people hear about what God used to do, one of the things they say is, "Oh, that was a very long while ago." They imagine that times have altered since then. Says one, "I can believe any thing about the Reformation—the largest accounts that can possibly be given I can take in." "And so could I concerning Whitfield and Wesley," says another; "all that is quite true; they did labor vigorously and successfully—but that was many years ago. Things were in a different state then from what they are now." Granted; but I want to know what the things have to do with it. I thought it was God that did it. Has God changed? Is he not an immutable God, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever? Does not that furnish an argument to prove that what God has done at one time he can do at another? Nay, I think I may push it a little further, and say what he has done once is a prophecy of what he intends to do again—that the mighty works which have been accomplished in the olden time shall all be repeated, and the Lord's song shall be sung again in Zion, and he shall again be greatly glorified. Others among you say, "Oh, well, I look upon these things as great prodigies—miracles. We are not to expect them every day." That is the very reason why we do not get them. If we had learnt to expect them, we should no doubt obtain them but we put them up on the shelf, as being out of the common order of our moderate religion, as being mere curiosities of Scripture history. We imagine such things, however true, to be prodigies of providence; we cannot imagine them to be according to the ordinary working of his mighty power. I beseech you, my friends, abjure that idea—put it out of your mind. Whatever

God has done in the way of converting sinners is to be looked upon as a precedent, for "his arm is not shortened that he cannot save, nor is his ear heavy that he cannot hear." If we are straitened at all, we are not straitened in him, we are straitened in our own bowels. Let us take the blame of it ourselves, and with earnestness seek that God would restore to us the faith of the men of old, that we may richly enjoy his grace as in the days of old. Yet there is another disadvantage under which these old stories labor. The fact is, we have not seen them. Why, I may talk to you ever so long about revivals, but you wont believe them half so much, nor half so truly, as if one were to occur in your very midst. If you saw it with your own eyes, then you would see the power of it. If you had lived in Whitfield's day, or had heard Grimshaw preach, you would believe any thing. Grimshaw would preach twenty-four times a week; he would preach many times in the course of a sultry day, going from place to place on horseback. That man *did* preach. It seemed as if heaven would come down to earth to listen to him. He spoke with a real earnestness, with all the fire of zeal that ever burned in mortal breast, and the people trembled while they listened to him, and said, "Certainly this is the voice of God." It was the same with Whitfield. The people would seem to move to and fro while he spoke, even as the harvest field is moved with the wind. So mighty was the energy of God that, after hearing such a sermon, the hardest-hearted men would go away and say, "There must be something in it; I never heard the like." Can you not realize these as literal facts? Do they stand up in all their brightness before your eyes? Then I think the stories you have heard with your ears should have a true and proper effect upon your own lives.

III. This brings me, in the third place, to the PROPER INFERENCES THAT ARE TO BE DRAWN FROM THE OLD STORIES OF GOD'S MIGHTY DEEDS.

I would that I could speak with the fire of some of those men whose names I have mentioned. Pray for me, that the Spirit of God may rest upon me, that I may plead with you for a little time with all my might, seeking to exhort and stir you up, that you may get a like revival in your midst. My dear friends, the

first effect which the reading of the history of God's mighty works should have upon us, is that of gratitude and praise Have we nothing to sing about to-day?—then let us sing concerning days of yore. If we cannot sing to our well-beloved a song concerning what he is doing in our midst, let us, nevertheless, take down our harps from the willows, and sing an old song and bless and praise his holy name for the things which he did to his ancient church, for the wonders which he wrought in Egypt, and in all the lands wherein he led his people, and brought them out with a high hand and with an outstretched arm. When we have thus begun to praise God for what he has done, I think I may venture to impress upon you one other great duty. Let what God has done suggest to you the prayer that he would repeat the like signs and wonders among us. Oh! men and brethren, what would this heart feel if I could but believe that there were some among you who would go home and pray for a revival of religion—men whose faith is large enough, and their love fiery enough to lead them from this moment to exercise unceasing intercessions that God would appear among us and do wondrous things here, as in the times of former generations. Why, look you here in this present assembly what objects there are for our compassion. Glancing round, I observe one and another whose history I may happen to know; but how many are there still unconverted—men who have trembled and who know they have, but have shaken off their fears, and once more are daring their destiny, determined to be suicides to their own souls and put away from them that grace which once seemed as if it were striving in their hearts? They are turning away from the gates of heaven, and running post-haste to the doors of hell; and will not you stretch out your hands to God to stop them in this desperate resolve? If out of this congregation there were but one unconverted man, and I could point him out and say, "There he sits, one soul that has never felt the love of God, and never has been moved to repentance," with what anxious curiosity would every eye regard him. I think out of the thousands of Christians here there is not one who would refuse to go home and pray for that solitary unconverted individual. But, oh! my brethren, it

is not one that is in danger of hell fire; here are hundreds and thousands of our fellow-creatures.

Shall I give you yet another reason why you should pray? Hitherto all other means have been used without effect. God is my witness how often I have striven in this pulpit to be the means of the conversion of men. I have preached my very heart out. I could say no more than I have said, and I hope the secrecy of my chamber is a witness to the fact that I do not cease to feel what I cease to speak; but I have a heart to pray for those of you who are never affected, or who, if affected, still quench the Spirit of God. My hearers, I have done my utmost. Will not you come to the help of the Lord against the mighty? Will not your prayers accomplish that which my preaching fails to do? Here they are; I commend them to you. Men and women whose hearts refuse to melt, whose stubborn knees will not bend, I give them up to you, and ask you to pray for them. Carry their cases on your knees before God. Wife! never cease to pray for your unconverted husband. Husband! never stay your supplication till you see your wife converted. And, O fathers and mothers! have you no unconverted children? have you not brought them here many and many a Sunday, and they remain just as they have been? You have sent them first to one chapel and then to another, and they are just what they were. The wrath of God abideth on them. Die they must; and should they die now, to a certainty you are aware that the flames of hell must engulph them. And do you refuse to pray for them? Hard hearts, brutish souls if, knowing Christ yourself, ye will not pray for those who come of your own loins—your children according to the flesh.

Dear friends, we do not know what God may do for us if we do but pray for a blessing. Look at the movement we have already seen. We have witnessed Exeter Hall, St. Paul's Cathedral, and Westminster Abbey crammed to the doors, but we have seen no effect as yet of all these mighty gatherings. Have we not tried to preach without trying to pray? Is it not likely that the church has been putting forth its preaching hand but not its praying hand? O dear friends! let us agonize in prayer, and it shall come to pass that this Music Hall shall wit

ness the sighs and groans of the penitent and the songs of the converted. It shall yet happen that this vast host shall not come and go, as now it does, but little the better; but men shall go out of this hall, praising God and saying:—"It was good to be there; it was none other than the house of God, and the very gate of heaven." Thus much to stir you up to prayer.

Another inference we should draw is, that all the stories we have heard should correct any self-dependence which may have crept into our treacherous hearts. Perhaps we as a congregation have begun to depend upon our numbers, and so forth. We may have thought, "Surely God must bless us through the ministry." Now let the stories which our fathers have told us remind you, and remind me, that God saved not by many nor by few; that it is not in us to do this, but God must do it all; it may be that some hidden preacher, whose name has never been known, some obscure denizen of St. Giles will yet start up in this city of London, and preach the Word with greater power than bishops or ministers have ever known before. I will welcome him; God be with him; let him come from where he may; only let God speed him, and let the work be done. Mayhap, however, God intends to bless the agency used in this place for your good and for your conversion. If so, I am thrice happy to think such should be the case. But place no dependence upon the instrument. No; when men laughed at us and mocked us most, God blessed us most; and now it is not a disreputable thing to attend the Music Hall. We are not so much despised as we once were; but I question whether we have so great a blessing as once we had. We would be willing to endure another pelting in the pillory, to go through another ordeal with every newspaper against us, and with every man hissing and abusing us, if God so pleases, if he will but give us a blessing. Only let him cast out of us any idea that our own bow and our own sword will get us the victory. We shall never get a revival here unless we believe that it is the Lord, and the Lord alone, that can do it.

Having made this statement, I will endeavor to stir you up with confidence that the result may be obtained that I have pictured, and that the stories we have heard of the olden time may become true in our day. Why should not every one of

appended to them. There are many very sweet conditional promises; one of them helped to set my soul at rest, it was this, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth." The condition there is, "Look unto me;" but ye can not prove it, unless you do look unto Christ. Here is another, "He that calleth on the name of the Lord shall be saved." What a blessed promise that is! But then you can not prove the promise unless you call on the name of the Lord. So that whenever we see a promise to which a condition is attached, if we wish to prove it in our own experience, we must ask of God to give us grace to fulfill the condition. That is one way of proving God.

But some will say, do not these conditions restrict the liberality and graciousness of God's promises? Oh no, beloved! for first the conditions are often put to describe the persons to whom the promises are made. Hence, my brother, when it is written, "He forgetteth not the cry of the humble," the promise fits thy chastened soul. When it saith, "To this man will I look, even to him that is of a poor and contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word," thou canst perceive, as it were, a description of thine own state. And when it saith, "I will satisfy her poor with bread," ye can some of you take comfort that the promise finds you in the fit condition to receive the blessing. But again, if the condition be, not a state, but a duty; then, let it be prayer—he gives the spirit of prayer; let it be faith—he is the giver of faith; let it be meekness- -he it is that clothes thee with meekness. Thus the conditions serve to commend the promises to God's own children, and to show the bounty of him who giveth grace for grace.

The second class of promises I will mention is *future*, and we cannot fully prove them yet, nor do we always wish it. Such a promise as this, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." We cannot prove this yet, for Christ has not appeared. We are told, and we know there is laid up for us a crown of righteousness at that day; how can we prove

that? Depend upon it, we ought to prove it, for we are commanded to prove God, and we must prove each of his promises. We must prove it, then, by patient waiting for him. I must say in myself, "All the days of my appointed pilgrimage I will wait, till my change come;" and I doubt not he will give me victory in death, for he has promised that he will make us sing aloud upon our beds, and will cheer us when we are passing through the valley of the shadow of death. Christian, prove God's promise of future blessedness, by a firm belief in it, and a patient waiting for it! Does Christ say he will come again "a second time without sin unto salvation?" Prove it by being among the number of those who look for his appearing, who patiently wait and hope for his advent. Does he say, that when we die we shall sleep in Jesus? We do prove this when we feel so confident of sleeping in Jesus that we are prepared to depart at any moment. You see that this kind of promise is to be proved in a different way from the conditional.

But then there is the absolute promise, and that is the largest and best promise of all, for if they were all conditional promises, and the conditions rested with us to fulfill, we should all be damned. If there were no absolute promises, there would not be a soul saved; if they were all made to characters, and no absolute promise were made that the characters should be given, we should perish, notwithstanding all God's promises. If he had simply said, "He that believeth shall be saved," we should all be lost, for we could not believe without strength; but when he says, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee," there is an absolute promise to back up the condition. If he hath told us that if we repent we shall be saved, there is the promise that he will give us a new heart—that he will draw us to himself and make us his people. Now, the absolute promise is not to be proved by doing any thing, but by believing in it. All I can do with an absolute promise is to believe. If I were to try to fulfill a condition, it would not be accepted by God, because no condition is appended to that kind of promise. He might well say to me, "If thou hast fulfilled the

trying to blow out the last live coal. Oh! sinner, turn while the lamp continues to blaze. Turn now, for when the last coal is dead thy repentance cannot avail thee. Thy everlasting yelling in torment cannot move the heart of God; thy groans and briny tears cannot move him to pity thee. To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts as in the provocation. Oh, to-day lay hold on Christ, "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him."

Albany Mar 26, 1901

SERMON II.

THE OUTPOURING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

"While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the Word."—Acts, x. 44.

The Bible is a book of the Revelation of God. The God after whom the heathen blindly searched, and for whom reason gropes in darkness, is here plainly revealed to us in the pages of divine authorship, so that he who is willing to understand as much of Godhead as man can know, may here learn it if he be not willingly ignorant and wilfully obstinate. The doctrine of the Trinity is specially taught in Holy Scripture. The word certainly does not occur, but the three divine persons of the One God are frequently and constantly mentioned, and Holy Scripture is exceedingly careful that we should all receive and believe that great truth of the Christian religion, that the Father is God, that the Son is God, that the Spirit is God, and yet there are not three Gods but one God: though they be each of them very God of very God, yet three in one and one in three is the Jehovah whom we worship. You will notice in the works of *Creation* how carefully the Scriptures assure us that all the three divine persons took their share. "In the beginning Jehovah created the heavens and the earth;" and in another place we are told that God said "Let *us* make man"—not one person, but all three taking counsel with each other with regard to the making of mankind. We know that the Father hath laid the foundations and fixed those solid beams of light on which the blue arches of the sky are sustained; but we know with equal certainty that Jesus Christ, the eternal *Logos*, was with the Father in the beginning, and "without him was not any thing made that was made:" moreover we

have equal certainty that the Holy Spirit had a hand in Creation, for we are told that "the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the earth; and the Spirit of the Lord moved upon the face of the waters;" and brooding with his dove-like wing, he brought out of the egg of chaos this mighty thing, the fair round world. We have the like proof of the three persons in the Godhead in the matter of *Salvation*. We know that God the Father gave his Son; we have abundant proof that God the Father chose his people from before the foundations of the world that he did invent the plan of salvation, and hath always given his free, willing, and joyous consent to the salvation of his people. With regard to the share that the Son had in salvation, that is apparent enough to all. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven; he was incarnate in a mortal body; he was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hades; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven; he sitteth at the right hand of God, where also he maketh intercession for us. As to the Holy Spirit, we have equally sure proof that the Spirit of God worketh in conversion; for everywhere we are said to be begotten of the Holy Spirit; continually it is declared, that unless a man be born again from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God; while all the virtues and the graces of Christianity are described as being the fruits of the Spirit, because the Holy Spirit doth from first to last work in us and carry out that which Jesus Christ hath beforehand worked for us in his great redemption, which also God the Father hath designed for us in his great predestinating scheme of salvation.

Now, it is to the work of the Holy Spirit that I shall this morning specially direct your attention; and I may as well mention the reason why I do so. It is this. We have received continually fresh confirmations of the good news from a far country, which has already made glad the hearts of many of God's people. In the United States of America there is certainly a great awakening. No sane man living there could think of denying it. There may be something of spurious excitement mixed up with it, but that good, lasting good, has been accomplished, no rational man can deny. Two hundred and fifty thousand persons—that is, a

quarter of a million—profess to have been regenerated since December last, have made a profession of their faith, and have united themselves with different sections of God's church. The work still progresses, if any thing, at a more rapid rate than before, and that which makes me believe the work to be genuine is just this —that the enemies of Christ's holy gospel are exceedingly wroth at it. When the devil roars at any thing, you may rest assured there is some good in it. The devil is not like some dogs we know of; he never barks unless there is something to bark at When Satan howls, we may rest assured he is afraid his kingdom is in danger. Now this great work in America has been manifestly caused by the outpouring of the Spirit, for no one minister has been a leader in it. All the ministers of the gospel have co-operated in it, but none of them have stood in the van. God himself has been the leader of his own hosts. It began with a desire for prayer. God's people began to pray: the prayer-meetings were better attended than before; it was then proposed to hold meetings at times that have never been set apart for prayer; these also were well attended; and now, in the city of Philadelphia, at the hour of noon, every day in the week, three thousand persons can always be seen assembled together for prayer in one place. Men of business, in the midst of their toil and labor, find an opportunity of running in there and offering a word of prayer, and then return to their occupations. And so, throughout all the States, prayer-meetings, larger or smaller in number, have been convened. And there has been real prayer. Sinners, beyond all count, have risen up in the prayer-meeting, and have requested the people of God to pray for them; thus making public to the world that they had a desire after Christ; they have been prayed for, and the church has seen that God verily doth hear and answer prayer. I find that the Unitarian ministers for a little while took no notice of it. Theodore Parker snarls and raves tremendously at it, but he is evidently in a maze; he does not understand the mystery, and acts with regard to it as swine are said to do with pearls. While the church was found asleep, and doing very little, the Socinian could afford to stand in his pulpit and sneer at any thing like evangelical religion; but now that there has been an awakening, he looks like a man

that has just awakened out of sleep. He sees something; he does not know what it is. The power of religion is just that which will always puzzle the Unitarian, for he knows but little about that. At the form of religion he is not much amazed, for he can to an extent endorse that himself; but the supernaturalism of the gospel—the mystery—the miracle—the power—the demonstration of the Spirit that comes with the preaching, is wha such men cannot comprehend, and they gaze and wonder, an. then become filled with wrath; but still they have to confess there is something there they cannot understand, a mental phenomenon that is far beyond their philosophy—a thing which they cannot reach by all their science, nor understand by all their reason.

Now, if we have the like effect produced in this land, the one thing we must seek is the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and I thought, perhaps, this morning in preaching upon the work of the Holy Spirit, that next might be fulfilled—"Him that honoreth me I will honor." My sincere desire is to honor the Holy Spirit this morning, and if he will be pleased to honor his church in return, unto him shall be the glory for ever.

"While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the Word."

In the first place, I shall endeavor to describe *the method of the Spirit's operation;* secondly, *the absolute necessity of the Holy Spirit's influence*, if we could see men converted; and then, in the third place, I shall suggest the ways and means by which, under divine grace, we may obtain a like falling down of the Spirit upon our churches.

I. In the first place, then, I will endeavor to explain THE METHOD OF THE HOLY SPIRIT'S OPERATIONS. But let me guard myself against being misunderstood. We can explain what the Spirit does, but how he does it no man must pretend to know. The work of the Holy Spirit is the peculiar mystery of the Christian religion. Almost any other thing is plain, but this must remain an inscrutable secret into which it were wrong for us to attempt to pry. Who knoweth where the winds are begotten? Who knoweth, therefore, how the Spirit worketh, for he is like the wind? "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest

the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." In Holy Scripture certain great secrets of nature are mentioned as being parallel with the secret working of the Spirit. The pro creation of children is instanced as a parallel wonder, for we know not the mystery thereof; how much less, therefore, shall we expect to know that more secret and hidden mystery of the new birth and new creation of man in Christ Jesus. But let no man be staggered at this, for they are mysteries in nature: the wisest man will tell you there are depths in nature into which he cannot dive, and heights into which he cannot soar. He who pretends to have unravelled the knot of creation hath made a mistake; he may have cut the knot by his rough ignorance, and by his foolish conjectures, but the knot itself must remain beyond the power of man's unravelling, until God himself shall explain the secret. There are marvellous things, that, as yet, men have sought to know in vain. They may, perhaps, discover many of them, but how the Spirit works no man can know. But now I wish to explain what the Holy Spirit does, although we cannot tell how he does it. I take it that the Holy Spirit's work in conversion is two-fold. First, it is an awakening of the powers that man already has, and secondly, it is an implantation of powers which he never had at all.

In the great work of the new birth, the Holy Spirit first of all *awakens the mental powers;* for be it remembered, that the Holy Spirit never gives any man new *mental* powers. Take, for instance, reason—the Holy Spirit does not give men reason, for they have reason prior to their conversion. What the Holy Spirit does is to teach our reason right reason—to set our reason in the right track, so that we can use it for the high purpose of discerning between good and evil; between the precious and vile. The Holy Spirit does not give man a will, for man has a will before; but he makes the will that was in bondage to Satan free to the service of God. The Holy Spirit gives no man the power to think, or the organ of belief—for man has power to believe or think as far as the mental act is concerned; but he gives that belief which is already there a tendency to believe the right thing, and he gives to the power of thought the propensity

to think in the right way; so that instead of thinking irregularly, we begin to think as God would have us think, and our mind desireth to walk in the steps of God's revealed truth. There may be here, this morning, a man of enlarged understanding in things political—but his understanding is darkened with regard to spiritual things; he sees no beauty in the person of Christ—he sees nothing desirable in the way of holiness—he chooses the evil and forsakes the good. Now the Holy Spirit will not give him a new understanding, but he will cleanse his old understanding so that he will discern between things that differ, and shall discover that it is but a poor thing to enjoy "the pleasures of sin for a season," and let go an "eternal weight of glory." There shall be a man here, too, who is desperately set against religion, and willeth not to come to God, and, do what we will, we are not able to persuade him to change his mind and turn to God. The Holy Spirit will not make a new will in that man, but he will turn his old will, and instead of willing to do evil he will make him will to do right—he will make him will to be saved by Christ—he will make him "willing in the day of his power." Remember, there is no power in man so fallen but that the Holy Spirit can raise it up. However debased a man may be, in one instant, by the miraculous power of the Spirit, all his faculties may be cleansed and purged. Ill-judging reason may be made to judge rightly; stout, obstinate wills may be made to run willingly in the ways of God's commandments; evil and depraved affections may in an instant be turned to Christ, and old desires, that are tainted with vice, may be replaced by heavenly aspirations. The work of the Spirit on the mind is the re-modelling of it—the new forming of it. He doth not bring new materials to the mind—it is in another part of the man that he puts up a new structure—but he puts the mind that had fallen out of order into its proper shape. He builds up pillars that had fallen down, and erects the palaces that had crumbled to the earth. This is the first work of the Holy Spirit upon the mind of man.

Besides this, the Holy Spirit gives to men *powers which they never had before.* According to Scripture, I believe man is constituted in a three-fold manner. He has a body; by the Holy Spirit that body is made the temple of the Lord. He has

a mind; by the Holy Spirit that mind is made like an altar in the temple. But man by nature is nothing higher than that; he is mere body and soul. When the Spirit comes, he breathes into him a third higher principle, which we call the Spirit. The Apostle describes man as man, "body, soul and spirit." Now if you search all the mental writers through, you will find they ll declare there are only two parts—body and mind; and they re quite right, for they deal with unregenerate man; but in egenerate man there is a third principle as much superior to mere mind as mind is superior to dead animal matter—that third principle is that with which a man prays; it is that with which he savingly believes; or rather it is that which compels the mind to perform their acts. It is that which, operating upon the mind, makes the same use of the mind as the mind does of the body. When, after desiring to walk, I make my legs move, it is my mind that compels them; and so my Spirit, when I desire to pray, compels my mind to think the thought of prayer, and compels my soul also, if I desire to praise, to think the thought of praise, and lift itself upward towards God. As the body without the soul is dead, so the soul without the Spirit is dead, and one work of the Spirit is to quicken the dead soul by breathing into it the living Spirit; as it is written, "The first man, Adam, was made a living *soul*, but the second Adam was made a quickening *Spirit*"—and, "as we have borne the image of the earthy, so must we bear the image of the heavenly;" that is, we must have in us, if we would be converted, the quickening Spirit, which is put into us by God the Holy Ghost. I say again, the spirit has powers which the mind never has. It has the power of communion with Christ, which, to a degree, is a mental act; but it can no more be performed by man without the Spirit, than the act of walking could be performed by man if he were destitute of a soul to suggest the idea of walking. The Spirit suggests the thoughts of communion, which the mind obeys and carries out. Nay, there are times, I think, when the Spirit leaves the mind altogether; times when we forget every thing of earth, and one almost ceases to think, to reason, to judge, to weigh, or to will. Our souls are like the chariots of Amminadib, drawn swiftly onwards without any powers of

volition. We lean upon the breast of Jesus, and in rhapsody divine, and in ecstasy celestial, we enjoy the fruits of the land of the blessed, and pluck the clusters of Eschol before entering into the land of promise.

I think I have clearly put these two points before you. The work of the Spirit consists, first, in awakening powers already possessed by man, but which were asleep and out of order; and in the next place, in putting into man powers which he had not before. And to make this simple to the humblest mind, let me suppose man to be something like a machine; all the wheels are out of order, the cogs do not strike upon each other, the wheels do not turn regularly, the rods will not act, the order is gone. Now, the first work of the Spirit is to put these wheels in the right place, to fit the wheels upon the axles, to put the right axle to the right wheel, then to put wheel to wheel, so that they may act upon each other. But that is not all his work. The next thing is to put fire and steam so that these things shall go to work. He does not put fresh wheels, he puts old wheels into order, and then he puts the motive power which is to move the whole. First he puts our mental powers into their proper order and condition, and then he puts a living, quickening Spirit, so that all these shall move according to the holy will and law of God.

But, mark you, this is not all the Holy Spirit does. For if he were to do this, and then leave us, none of us would get to heaven. If any of you should be so near to heaven that you could hear the angels singing over the walls—if you could almost see within the pearly gates—still, if the Holy Spirit did not help you the last step, you would never enter there. All the work is through his divine operation. Hence it is the Spirit who keeps the wheels in motion, and who takes away that defilement which, naturally engendered by our original sin, falls upon the machine and puts it out of order. He takes this away, and keeps the machine constantly going without injury, until at last he removes man from the place of defilement to the land of the blessed, a perfect creature, as perfect as he was when he came from the mould of his Maker.

And I must say, before I leave this point, that all the former

part of what I have mentioned is done instantaneously. When a man is converted to God, it is done in a moment. Regeneration is an instantaneous work. Conversion to God, the fruit of regeneration, occupies all our life, but regeneration itself is effected in an instant. A man hates God; the Holy Spirit makes him love God. A man is opposed to Christ, he hates his Gospel, does not understand it, and will not receive it; the Holy Spirit comes puts light into his darkened understanding, takes the chain from his bondaged will, gives liberty to his conscience, gives life to his dead soul, so that the voice of conscience is heard, and the man becomes a new creature in Christ Jesus. And all this is done, mark you, by the instantaneous supernatural influence of God the Holy Ghost working as he willeth among the sons of men.

II. Having thus dwelt upon the method of the Holy Spirit's work, I shall now turn to the second point, THE ABSOLUTE NECESSITY OF THE SPIRIT'S WORK IN ORDER TO CONVERSION. In our text we are told that "while Peter spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the Word." Beloved, the Holy Ghost fell on Peter first, or else it would not have fallen on his hearers. There is a necessity that the preacher himself, if we are to have souls saved, should be under the influence of the Spirit. I have constantly made it my prayer that I might be guided by the Spirit even in the smallest and least important parts of the service; for you cannot tell but that the salvation of a soul may depend upon the reading of a hymn, or upon the selection of a chapter. Two persons have joined our church and made a profession of being converted simply through my reading a hymn—

"Jesus, lover of my soul."

They did not remember any thing else in the hymn; but those words made such a deep impression upon their minds, that they could not help repeating them for days afterwards, and then the thought arose, "Do I love Jesus?" And then they considered what strange ingratitude it was that he should be the lover of their souls, and yet they should not love him. Now I believe the Holy Spirit led me to read that hymn. And many persons have been converted by some striking saying of the preacher.

But why was it the preacher uttered that saying? Simply because he was led thereunto by the Holy Spirit. Rest assured, beloved, that when any part of the sermon is blessed to your heart, the minister said it because he was ordered to say it by his Master. I might preach to-day a sermon which I preached on Friday, and which was useful then, and there might be no good whatever come from it now, because it might not be the sermon which the Holy Ghost would have delivered to-day. But if with sincerity of heart I have sought God's guidance in selecting the topic, and he rests upon me in the preaching of the Word, there is no fear but that it shall be found adapted to your immediate wants. The Holy Spirit must rest upon your preachers. Let them have all the learning of the wisest men, and all the eloquence of such men as Demosthenes and Cicero, still the Word cannot be blessed to you, unless first of all the Spirit of God hath guided the minister's mind in the selection of his subject, and in the discussion of it.

But if Peter himself were under the hand of the Spirit, that would fail unless the Spirit of God, then, did fall upon our hearers; and I shall endeavor now to show the absolute necessity of the Spirit's work in the conversion of men.

Let us remember what kind of thing the work is, and we shall see that other means are altogether out of the question. It is quite certain that men cannot be converted by physical means. The Church of Rome thought that she could convert men by means of armies; so she invaded countries, and threatened them with war and bloodshed unless they would repent and embrace her religion. However, it availed but little, and men were prepared to die rather than leave their faith; she therefore tried those beautiful things—stakes, racks, dungeons, axes, swords, fire; and by these things she hoped to convert men. You have heard of the man who tried to wind up his watch with a pickaxe. That man was extremely wise compared with the man who thought to touch mind through matter. All the machines you like to invent cannot touch the mind. Talk about tying angel's wings with green withes, or manacling the cherubim with iron chains, and then talk about meddling with the minds of men through physical means. Why, the things don't act; they can

not act. All the king's armies that ever were, and all the warriors clothed with mail, with all their ammunition, could never touch the mind of man. That is an impregnable castle which is not to be reached by physical agency.

Nor, again, can man be converted by moral argument. "Well," says one, "I think he may. Let a minister preach earnestly, and he may persuade men to be converted." Ah! beloved, it is for want of knowing better that you say so. Melancthon thought so; but you know what he said after he tried it—"Old Adam is too strong for young Melancthon." So will every preacher find it, if he thinks his arguments can ever convert man. Let me give you a parallel case. Where is the logic that can persuade an Ethiopian to change his skin? By what argument can you induce a leopard to renounce his spots? Even so may he that is accustomed to do evil learn to do well. But if the Ethiopian's skin be changed it must be by a supernatural process; and if the leopard's spots be removed, he that made the leopard must do it. Even so is it with the heart of man. If sin were a thing *ab extra*, and external, we could induce man to change it. For instance, you may induce a man to leave off drunkenness or swearing, because those things are not a part of his nature—he has added that vice to his original depravity. But the hidden evil of the heart is beyond all moral suasion. I dare say a man might have enough argument to induce him to hang himself, but I am certain no argument will ever induce him to hang his sins, to hang his self-righteousness, and to come and humble himself at the foot of the cross; for the religion of Christ is so contrary to all the propensities of man, that it is like swimming against the stream to approach it; for the stream of man's will and man's desire is exactly the opposite of the religion of Jesus Christ. If you wanted a proof of that, at the lifting of my finger there are thousands in this hall who would rise to prove it; for they would say, "I have found it so, sir, in my experience; I hated religion as much as any man; I despised Christ and his people, and I know not to this day how it is that I am what I am, unless it be the work of God." I have seen the tears run down a man's cheeks when he has come to me in order to be united to the church of Christ, and he has said, "Sir, I wonder how it is I am here to-day; if any one

had told me a year ago that I should think as I now think, and feel as I now feel, I should have called him a born fool for his pains; I used to say I never would be one of those canting Methodists; I liked to spend my Sunday in pleasure, and I did not see why I was to be cooping myself up in the house of God listening to a man talk. *I* pray, sir? No, not I. I said the best providence in all the world was a good strong pair of hands, and to take care of what you got. If any man talked to me about religion, why I would slam the door in his face, and pretty soon put him out; but the things that I loved then I now hate, and the things that then I hated now I love, I cannot do or say enough to show how total is the change that has been wrought in me. It must have been the work of God; it could not have been wrought by me, I feel assured; it must be some one greater than myself, who could thus turn my heart." I think these two things are proofs that we want something more than nature, and since physical agency will not do, and mere moral suasion will never accomplish it, that there must be an absolute necessity for the Holy Spirit.

But again, if you will just think a minute what the work is, you will soon see that none but God can accomplish it. In the Holy Scripture, conversion is often spoken of as being a new creation. If you talk about creating yourselves, I should feel obliged if you would create a fly first. Create a gnat, create a grain of sand, and when you have created that, you may talk about creating a new heart. Both are alike, impossible, for creation is the work of God. But still, if you could create a grain of dust, or create even a world, it would not be half the miracle, for you must first find a thing which has created itself. Could that be? Suppose you had no existence, how could you create yourself? Nothing cannot produce any thing. Now, how ca man re-create himself. A man cannot create himself into a nev condition, when he has no being in that condition, but is, as yet, a thing that is not.

Then, again, the work of creation is said to be like the resurrection. "We are alive from the dead." Now, can the dead in the grave raise themselves? Let any minister who thinks he can convert souls go and raise a corpse; let him go and stand in one

of the cemeteries, and bids the tombs open wide their mouths, and make room for those once buried there to awaken, and he will have to preach in vain. But if he could do it, that is not the miracle: it is for the dead to raise themselves, for an inanimate corpse to kindle in its own breast the spark of life anew. If the work be a resurrection, a creation, does it not strike you that it must be beyond the power of man? It must be wrought in him by no one less than God himself.

And there is yet one more consideration, and I shall have concluded this point. Beloved, even if man could save himself, I would have you recollect how averse he is to it? If we could make our hearers all willing, the battle would be accomplished. "Well," says one, "If I am willing to be saved, can I not be saved?" Assuredly you can, but the difficulty is, we cannot bring men to be willing. That shows, therefore, that there must be a constraint put upon their will. There must be an influence exerted upon them, which they have not in themselves, in order to make them willing in the day of God's power. And this is the glory of the Christian religion. The Christian religion has within its own bowels power to spread itself. We do not ask you to be willing first. We come and tell you the news, and we believe that the Spirit of God working with us will make you willing. If the progress of the Christian religion depended upon the voluntary assent of mankind, it would never go an inch further, but because the Christian religion has with it an omnipotent influence, constraining men to believe it, it is therefore that it is and must be triumphant, "till like a sea of glory it spreads from shore to shore."

III. Now I shall conclude by bringing one or two thoughts forward, with regard to WHAT MUST BE DONE AT THIS TIME IN ORDER TO BRING DOWN THE HOLY SPIRIT. It is quite certain, beloved, if the Holy Spirit willed to do it, that every man, woman and child in this place might be converted now. If God, the sovereign Judge of all, would be pleased now to send out his Spirit, every inhabitant of this million-peopled city might be brought at once to turn unto the living God. Without instrumentality, without the preacher, without books, without any thing, God has it in his power to convert men. We have known per-

sons about their business, not thinking about religion at all, who have had a thought injected into their hearts, and that thought has been the prolific mother of a thousand meditations; and through these meditations they have been brought to Christ. Without the aid of the minister, the Holy Spirit has thus worked, and to-day he is not restrained. There may be some men, great in infidelity, staunch in opposition to the cross of Christ, but, without asking their consent, the Holy Spirit can pull down the strong man, and make the mighty man bow himself. For when we talk of the Omnipotent God, there is nothing too great for him to do. But, beloved, God has been pleased to put great honor upon instrumentality; he could work without it if he pleased, but he does not do so. However, this is the first thought I want to give you; if you would have the Holy Spirit exert himself in our midst, you must first of all look to him and not to instrumentality. When Jesus Christ preached, there were very few converted under him, and the reason was, because the Holy Spirit was not abundantly poured forth. He had the Holy Spirit without measure himself, but on others the Holy Spirit was not as yet poured out. Jesus Christ said, "Greater works than these shall ye do because I go to my Father, in order to send the Holy Spirit;" and recollect that those few who were converted under Christ's ministry, were not converted by him, but by the Holy Spirit that rested upon him at that time. Jesus of Nazareth was anointed of the Holy Spirit. Now, then, if Jesus Christ, the great founder of our religion, needed to be anointed of the Holy Spirit, how much more our ministers? And if God would always make the distinction even between his own Son as an instrument, and the Holy Spirit as the agent, how much more ought we to be careful to do that between poor puny men and the Holy Spirit? Never let us hear you say again, "So many persons were converted by So-and-so." They were not converted, they were not converted by man. Instrumentality is to be used, but the Spirit is to have the honor of it. Pay no more a superstitious reverence to man; think no more that God is tied to your plans and to your agencies. Do not imagine that so many city missionaries, so much good will be done. Do not say, "So many preachers; so many sermons; so many souls

saved.' Do not say, "So many Bibles; so many tracts; so much good done." Not so; use these, but remember it is not in that proportion the blessing comes; it is, so much Holy Spirit, so many souls ingathered.

And now another thought. If we would have the Spirit, be loved, we must each of us try to honor him. There are some chapels into which if you were to enter, you would never know there was a Holy Spirit. Mary Magdalen said of old, "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him," and the Christian might often say so, for there is nothing said about the Lord until they come to the end, and then there is just the benediction, or else you would not know that there were three persons in one God at all. Until our churches honor the Holy Spirit we shall never see it abundantly manifested in our midst. Let the preacher always confess before he preaches that he relies upon the Holy Spirit. Let him burn his manuscript and depend upon the Holy Spirit. If the Spirit does not come to help him, let him be still, and let the people go home and pray that the Spirit will help him next Sunday.

And do you, also, in the use of all your agencies, always honor the Spirit? We often begin our religious meetings without prayer: it is all wrong. We must honor the Spirit; unless we put him first, he will never make crowns for us to wear. He will get victories, but he will have the honor of them; and if we do not give to him the honor, he will never give to us the privilege and success. And, best of all, if you would have the Holy Spirit, let us meet together earnestly to pray for him. Remember, the Holy Spirit will not come to us as a church unless we seek him. "For this thing will I be inquired of all the house of Israel to do it for them." We purpose during the coming week to hold meetings of special prayer, to supplicate for a revival of religion. "Prove me now here, saith the Lord of Hosts, and see if I do not pour you out a blessing so that there shall not be room enough to receive it." Let us meet and pray, and if God doth not hear us, it will be the first time he has broken his promise. Come, let us go up to the sanctuary; let us meet together in the house of the Lord, and offer solemn supplication; and I say again, if the Lord doth not make bare his arm

in the sight of all the people, it will be the reverse of all his previous actions, it will be the contrary of all his promises, and contradictory to himself. We have only to try him, and the result is certain. In dependence on his Spirit, if we only meet for prayer, the Lord shall bless us, and all the ends of the earth shall fear him. O Lord, lift up thyself because of thine enemies; pluck thy right hand out of thy bosom, O Lord our God, for Christ's sake. **Amen.**

SERMON III.

THE SYMPATHY OF THE TWO WORLDS.

"There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."—LUKE, xv. 10. C.O.06.

MAN'S heart is never big enough to hold either its joys or its sorrows. You never heard of a man whose heart was exactly full of sorrow; for no sooner is it full than it overflows. The first prompting of the soul is to tell its sorrow to another. The reason is, that our heart is not large enough to hold our grief, and we need to have another heart to receive a portion thereof. It is even so with our joy. When the heart is full of joy, it always allows its joy to escape. It is like the fountain in the market-place; whenever it is full it runs away in streams, and so soon as it ceases to overflow, you may be quite sure that it has ceased to be full. The only full heart is the overflowing heart. You know this, beloved, you have proved it to be true; for when your soul has been full of joy, you have first called together your own kindred and friends, and you have communicated to them the cause of your gladness; and when those vessels have been full even to the brim, you are like the woman who borrowed empty vessels of her neighbors, for you asked each of them to become partakers in your joy, and when the hearts of all your neighbors have been full, you have felt as if they were not large enough, and the whole world has been called upon to join in your praise. You bade the fathomless ocean drink in your joy; you spoke to the trees and bade them clap their hands, while the mountains and hills were invoked by you to break forth into singing; the very stars of heaven seemed to look down upon you, and you bade them sing for you, and all the world was full

of music through the music that was in your heart. And, after all, what is man but the great musician of the world? The universe is a great organ with mighty pipes. Space, time, eternity, are like the throats of this great organ; and man, a little creature, puts his fingers on the keys, and wakes the universe to thunders of harmony, stirring up the whole creation to mightiest acclamations of praise. Know ye not that man is God's high priest in the universe? All things else are but the sacrifice: but he is the priest,—carrying in his heart the fire, and in his hand the wood, and in his mouth the two-edged sword of dedication, with which he offers up all things to God.

But I have no doubt, beloved, the thought has sometimes struck us that our praise does not go far enough. We seem as if we lived in an isle cut off from the main land. This world, like a fair planet, swims in a sea of ether unnavigated by mortal ship. We have sometimes thought that surely our praise was confined to the shores of this poor narrow world, that it was impossible for us to pull the ropes which might ring the bells of heaven, that we could by no means whatever reach our hands so high as to sweep the celestial chords of angelic harps. We have said to ourselves there is no connection between earth and heaven. A huge black wall divides us. A strait of unnavigable waters shuts us out. Our prayers cannot reach to heaven, neither can our praises affect the celestials. Let us learn from our text how mistaken we are. We are, after all, however much we seem to be shut out from heaven, and from the great universe, but a province of God's vast united empire, and what is done on earth is known in heaven; what is sung on earth is sung in heaven; and there is a sense in which it is true that the tears of earth are wept again in paradise, and the sorrows of mankind are felt again, even on the throne of the Most High.

My text tells us, "There is joy in the presence of the angel of God over one sinner that repenteth." It seems as if it showed me a bridge by which I might cross over into eternity. It doth, as it were, exhibit to me, certain magnetic wires which convey the intelligence of what is done here to spirits in another world. It teaches me that there is a real and wonderful con

nection between this lower world, and that which is beyond the skies, where God dwelleth, in the land of the happy.

We shall talk about that subject a little this morning. My first head will be *the sympathy of the world above with the world below;* the second, *the judgment of the angels,*—they rejoice over repenting sinners; we shall see what is their ground for so doing. The third, will be *a lesson for the saints;* if the angels in heaven rejoice over repenting sinners, so should we.

I. In the first place our text teaches us THE SYMPATHY OF THE TWO WORLDS. Imagine not, O son of man, that thou art cut off from heaven; for there is a ladder, the top whereof doth rest at the foot of the throne of the Almighty, the base whereof is fixed in the lowest place of man's misery. Conceive not that there is a great gulph fixed between thee and the *Father*, across which his mercy cannot come, and over which thy prayers and faith can never leap. Oh, think not, son of man, that thou dwellest in a storm-girt island, cut off from the continent of eternity. I beseech thee, believe that there is a bridge across that chasm, a road along which feet may travel. This world is not separated, for all creation is but one body. And know thou, O son of man, though thou in this world doth but dwell, as it were on the foot, yet from the feet even to the head, there are nerves and veins that do unite the whole. The same great heart which beats in heaven beats on earth. The love of the *Eternal Father* which cheers the celestial makes glad the terrestrial too. Rest assured that though the glory of the celestial be one and the glory of the terrestrial be another, yet are they but another in appearance, for, after all, they are the same. Oh! list thee, son of man, and thou wilt soon learn that thou art no stranger in a strange land—a houseless Joseph in the land of Egypt, shut out from his Father, and his children, who still remain in the happy paradise of Canaan. No, thy Father loves thee still. There is a connection between thee and him. Strange that though leagues of distance lie between the finite creature and the infinite Creator, yet there are links that unite us both! When a tear is wept by thee, think not thy Father doth not behold; for, "Like as a father pitieth his children so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." Thy sigh is able to move the heart of Jehovah; thy whisper can

incline his ear unto thee; thy prayer can stay his hands; thy faith can move his arm. Oh! think not that God sits on high in an eternal slumber, taking no note of thee. "Shall a mother forget her suckling child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, she may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Engraven upon the Father's hand thy name remains; and on his heart recorded there thy person stands. He thought of thee before the worlds were made; before the channels of the sea were scooped, or the gigantic mountains lifted their heads in the white clouds, he thought of thee. He thinketh on thee still. "I, the Lord, do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day." For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro in every place to show himself strong on the behalf of all them that fear him. Thou art not cut off from him. Thou dost move in him; in him thou dost live and have thy being. "He is a very present help in time of trouble."

Remember, again, O heir of immortality, that thou art not only linked to the Godhead, but there is another one in heaven with whom thou hast a strange, yet near connection. In the centre of the throne sits one who is thy brother, allied to thee by blood. *The Son of God*, eternal, equal with his Father, became in the fulness of time the Son of Mary, an infant of a span long He was, yea is, bone of thy bone and flesh of thy flesh. Think not that thou art cut off from the celestial world, while he is there; for is he not thy head, and hath he not himself declared that thou art a member of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones? Oh, man, thou art not separated from heaven whilst Jesus tells thee—

> "I feel at my heart all thy sighs and thy groans,
> For thou art most near me, my flesh and my bones;
> In all thy distresses, thy Head feels the pain,
> They all are most needful, not one is in vain."

Oh, poor, disconsolate mourner, Christ remembers thee every hour. Thy sighs are his sighs; thy groans are his groans; thy prayers are his prayers:—

> "He in his measure feels afresh,
> What every member bears."

Crucified he is when thou art crucified; he dies when thou dies; thou livest in him, and he livest in thee, and because he lives shalt thou live also: thou shalt rise in him, and thou shalt sit together in the heavenly places with him. Oh, never was husband nearer to his wife, and never head nearer to the members, and never soul nearer to the body of this flesh, than Christ is unto thee; and while it is so, think not that heaven and earth are divided. They are but kindred worlds; two ships moored close to one another, and one short plank of death will enable you to step from one into the other: this ship, all black and coaly, having done the coasting trade, the dusty business of to-day, and being full of the blackness of sorrow; and that ship all golden, with its painted pennon flying, and its sail all spread, white as the down of the sea-bird, fair as the angel's wing—I tell thee, man, the ship of heaven is moored side by side with the ship of earth, and rock though this ship may, and career though she will on stormy winds and tempests, yet the invisible and golden ship of heaven sails by her side never sundered, never divided, always ready, in order that when the hour shall come, thou mayest leap from the black, dark ship, and step upon the golden deck of that thrice happy one in which thou shalt sail for ever.

But, O man of God, there are other golden links besides these which bind the present to the future, and time unto eternity. And what are time and eternity, after all, to the believer, but, like the Siamese twins, never to be separated? This earth is heaven below, the next world is but a heaven above; it is the same house—this is the lower room, and that the upper, but the same roof cover, both, and the same dew falls upon each. Remember, beloved, that *the spirits of the just made perfect* are never far from you and me if we are lovers of Jesus. All those who have passed the flood have still communion with us. Do we not sing—

> "The saints on earth, and all the dead,
> But one communion make;
> All join in Christ, the living Head,
> And of his grace partake?"

We have but one Head for the church triumphant and for the church militant:

"One army of the living God,
To his command we bow;
Part of the host have cross'd the flood,
And part are crossing now."

Doth not the apostle tell us that the saints above are a cloud of witnesses? After he had mentioned Abraham, and Isaac and Jacob, and Gideon, and Barak, and Jephthah, did he not say, "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight." Lo we are running in the plains, and the glorified ones are looking down upon us. Thy mother's eyes follow thee, young man; a father's eyes are looking down upon thee, young woman. The eyes of my godly grandmother, long since glorified, I doubt not, rest on me perpetually. No doubt, in heaven they often talk of us. Methinks they sometimes visit this poor earth—they never go out of heaven, it is true, for heaven is everywhere to them. This world is to them but just one corner of God's heaven, one shady bower of paradise.

The saints of the living God, are, I doubt not, very near unto us, when we think them very far away. At any rate, they still remember us, still look for us; for this is ever upon their hearts —the truth that they without us cannot be made perfect. They cannot be a perfect church till we are gathered in, and therefore do they long for our appearing.

But, to come to our text a little more minutely. It assures us that *the angels* have communion with us. Bright spirits, first-born sons of God, do ye think of me? Oh, cherubim, great and mighty; seraphim, burning, winged with lightning, do ye think of us? Gigantic is your stature. Our poet tells us that the wand of an angel might make a mast for some tall admiral; and, doubtless, he was right when he said so. Those angels of God are creatures mighty and strong, doing his commandments, hearkening to his word—and do they take notice of us? Let the Scripture answer, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister unto those that shall be heirs of salvation?" "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him." "For he shall give his angels charge over thee; to keep thee in all thy ways; they shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against

a stone." Yes, the brightest angels are but the serving men of the saints; they are our lacqueys and our footmen. They wait upon us; they are the troops of our body guard; and we might, if our eyes were opened, see what Elisha saw, horses of fire and chariots of fire round about us; so that we should joyously say, "More are they that are with us than they that are against us."

Our text tells us that the angels of God rejoice over repenting sinners. How is that? They are always as happy as they can be; how can they be any happier? The text does not say that they are any happier; but perhaps that they show their happiness more. A man may have a Sabbath every day, as he ought to have if he be a Christian; and yet on the first day of the week he will let this Sabbatism come out plainly; for then the world shall see that he doth rest. "A merry heart hath a continual feast;" but then even the merry heart hath some special days on which it feasteth well. To the glorified every day is a Sabbath; but of some it can be said, "and that Sabbath was an high day." There are days when the angels sing more loudly than usual; they are always harping well God's praise, but sometimes the gathering hosts, who have been flitting far through the universe, come home to their centre; and round the throne of God, standing in serried ranks, marshalled not for battle but for music, on certain set and appointed days they chant the praises of the Son of God, "who loved us and gave himself for us." And do you ask me when those days occur? I tell you, the birthday of every Christian is a sonnet day in heaven. There are Christmas-days in paradise, where Christ's high mass is kept, and Christ is glorified, not because he was born in a manger, but because he is born in a broken heart. There are days—good days in heaven; days of sonnet, red-letter days, of overflowing adoration. And these are days when the shepherd brings home the lost sheep upon his shoulder, when the church has swept her house and found the lost piece of money; for then are these friends and neighbors called together, and they rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory over one sinner that repenteth.

I have thus, I hope, shown you that there is a greater connection between earth and heaven than any of us dreamed. And now let none of us think, when we look upward to the blue sky, that

we are far from heaven; it is a very little distance from us. When the day comes we shall go post-haste there, even without horses and chariots of fire. Balaam called it a land that is very far off; we know better—it is a land that is very near. Even now

> "By faith we join our hands
> With those that went before,
> And greet the blood-besprinkled bands
> Upon the eternal shore."

All hail, bright spirits! I see you now. All hail, angels! All hail, ye brethren redeemed! A few more hours, or days, or months, and we shall join your happy throng; till then your joyous fellowship, your sweet compassion shall ever be our comfort and our consolation—and, having weathered all storms of life, we shall at last anchor with you within the port of everlasting peace.

II. But the angels are said to sing whenever a sinner repents. Let us see if there is any JUDGMENT IN THEIR SONG, or whether they make a mistake. Why do angels sing over penitent sinners?

In the first place, I think it is because they remember the days of creation. You know, when God made this world, and fixed the beams of the heavens in sockets of light, the morning stars sang together, and the sons of God shouted for joy; as they saw star after star flying abroad, like sparks from the great anvil of Omnipotence, they began to sing; and every time they saw a new creature made upon this little earth, they praised afresh. When first they saw light they clapped their hands, and said "Great is Jehovah; for he said 'Light be!' and light was.' And when they saw sun, and moon, and stars, again they clapped their hands, and they said, "He hath made great lights; for his mercy endureth for ever. The sun to rule the day; for his mercy endureth for ever. The moon to rule the night; for his mercy endureth for ever." And over every thing he made, they chanted evermore that sweet song, "Creator, thou art to be magnified; for thy mercy endureth for ever." Now, when they see a sinner returning, they see the creation over again; for repentance is a new creation. No man ever repents until God makes in him a new heart and right spirit. I do not know that ever since the day when God made the world, with the exception of

new hearts, the angels have seen God make any thing else. He may, if he hath so pleased, have made fresh worlds since that time. But perhaps the only instance of new creation they have ever seen since the first day, is the creation of a new heart and a right spirit within the breast of a poor penitent sinner. Therefore do they sing, because creation cometh over again.

I doubt not, too, that they sing because they behold God' works afresh shining in excellence. When God first made th world, he said of it, "It is very good"—he could not say so now. There are many of you that God could not say that of. He would have to say the very reverse. He would have to say, "No, that is very bad, for the trail of the serpent hath swept away thy beauty, that moral excellence which once dwelt in manhood has passed away;" but when the sweet influences of the Spirit bring men to repentance and faith again, God looks upon man, and he saith, "It is very good." For what his Spirit makes is like himself—good, and holy, and precious; and God smiles again over his twice-made creation, and saith once more, "It is very good." Then the angels begin again, and praise his name, whose works are always good and full of beauty.

But, beloved, the angels sing over sinners that repent, because they know what that poor sinner has escaped. You and I can never imagine all the depths of hell. Shut out from us by a black veil of darkness, we cannot tell the horrors of that dismal dungeon of lost souls. Happily, the wailings of the damned have never startled us, for a thousand tempests were but a maiden's whisper, compared with one wail of a damned spirit. It is not possible for us to see the tortures of those souls who dwell eternally within an anguish that knows no alleviation. These eyes would become sightless balls of darkness, if they were permitted for an instant to look into that ghastly shrine of torment. Hell is horrible, for we may say of it, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the horrors which God hath prepared for them that hate him. But the angels know better than you or I could guess. They know it; not that they have felt it, but they remember that day when Satan and his angels rebelled against God. They remember

the day when the third part of the stars of heaven revolted against their liege Lord; and they have not forgotten how the red right hand of Jehovah Jesus was wrapt in thunder; they do not forget that breach in the battlements of heaven when, down from the greatest heights to the lowest depths, Lucifer and his hosts were hurled; they have never forgotten how, with sound of trumpet, they pursued the flying foe down to the gulphs of black despair; and, as they neared that place where the great serpent is to be bound in chains, they remember how they saw Tophet, which was prepared of old, the pile whereof is wood and much smoke; and they recollect how, when they winged back their flight, every tongue was silent, although they might have shouted the praise of him who conquered Lucifer; but on them all there did sit a solemn awe of one who could smite a cherubim, and cast him in hopeless bonds of everlasting despair. They knew what hell was, for they had looked within its jaws, and seen their own brothers fast enclosed within them; and, therefore, when they see a sinner saved, they rejoice, because there is one less to be food for the never-dying worm—one more soul escaped out of the mouth of the lion.

There is yet a better reason. The angels know what the joys of heaven are, and therefore they rejoice over one sinner that repenteth. We talk about pearly gates and golden streets, and white robes, and harps of gold, and crowns of amaranth, and all that; but if an angel could speak to us of heaven, he would smile and say, "All these fine things are but child's talk, and ye are little children, and ye cannot understand the greatness of eternal bliss, and therefore God has given you a child's horn book, and an alphabet, in which you may learn the first rough letters of what heaven is, but what it is thou dost not know. O mortal, thine eye hath never yet beheld its splendors; thine ear hath never yet been ravished with its melodies; thy heart has never been transported with its peerless joys." Thou mayest talk, and think, and guess, and dream, but thou canst never measure the infinite heaven which God has provided for his children: and therefore it is, when they see a soul saved and a sinner repenting, that they clap their hands; for they know that all those blessed mansions are theirs, since all those sweet places

of everlasting happiness are the entail of every sinner that repenteth.

But I want you just to read the text again, while I dwell upon another thought. "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner *that repenteth.*" Now, why do they not save their joy till that sinner dies and goes to heaven? Why do they rejoice over him when he repents? My Arminian friend, I think, ought to go to heaven to set them right upon this matter. According to his theory, it must be very wrong of them, because they rejoice prematurely. According to the Arminian doctrine a man may repent, and yet he may be lost; he may have grace to repent and believe, and yet he may fall from grace and be a cast-away. Now, angels, don't be too fast. Perhaps you may have to repent of this one day, if the Arminian doctrine be true; I would advise you to save your song for greater joys. Why, angels, perhaps the men that you are singing over to-day, you will have to mourn over to-morrow. I am quite sure that Arminius never taught his doctrine in heaven. I do not know whether he is there—I hope he is, but he is no longer an Arminian; but if he ever taught his doctrine there, he would be put out. The reason why angels rejoice is because they know that when a sinner repents, he is absolutely saved; or else they would rejoice prematurely, and would have good cause for retracting their merriment on some future occasion. But the angels know what Christ meant when he said, "I give unto my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand;" and therefore they rejoice over repenting sinners, because they know they are saved.

There is yet one more fact I will mention, before I leave this point. It is said that the angels "rejoice over *one* sinner that repenteth." Now, this evening it shall be my happy privilege to give the right hand of fellowship to no less than forty-eight sinners that have repented, and there will be great joy and rejoicing in our churches to-night, because these forty-eight have been immersed on a profession of their faith. But how loving are the angels to men; for they rejoice over *one* sinner that repenteth. There she is, in that garret where the stars look between the tiles. There is a miserable bed in that room, with but one bit of cover

ing, and she lieth there to die! Poor creature! many a night she has walked the streets in the time of her merriment; but now her joys are over; a foul disease, like a demon, is devouring her heart! She is dying fast, and no one careth for her soul! But there, in that chamber, she turns her face to the wall, and she cries. "O thou that savedst Magdalene, save me; Lord, I repent; have mercy upon me, I beseech thee." Did the bells ring in the street? Was the trumpet blown? Ah! no. Did men rejoice? Was there a sound of thanksgiving in the midst of the great congregation? No; no one heard it; for she died unseen. But stay! There was one standing at her bedside who noted well that tear; an angel, who had come down from heaven to watch over this stray sheep, and mark its return; and no sooner was her prayer uttered than he clapped his wings, and there was seen flying up to the pearly gates a spirit like a star. The heavenly guards came crowding to the gate, crying, "What news, O son of fire?" He said, "'Tis done." "And what is done?" they said. "Why, she has repented." "What! she who was once a chief of sinners? has she turned to Christ?" "'Tis even so," said he. And then they told it through the streets, and the bells of heaven rang marriage peals, for Magdalene was saved, and she who had been the chief of sinners was turned unto the living God.

It was in another place. A poor neglected little boy in ragged clothing had run about the streets for many a day. Tutored in crime, he was paving his path to the gallows; but one morning he passed by a humble room, where some men and women were sitting together teaching poor ragged children. He stepped in there, a wild Bedouin of the streets; they talked to him; they told him about a soul and about an eternity—things he had never heard before; they spoke of Jesus, and of good tidings of great joy to this poor friendless lad. He went another Sabbath, and another; his wild habits hanging about him, for he could not get rid of them. At last it happened that his teacher said to him one day, "Jesus Christ receiveth sinners." That little boy ran, but not home, for it was but a mockery to call it so—where a drunken father and a lascivious mother kept a hellish riot together. He ran, and under some dry arch, or in some wild unfrequented cor-

ner, he bent his little knees, and there he cried, that poor creature in his rags, "Lord, save me, or I perish;" and the little Arab was on his knees—the little thief was saved! He said—

"Jesus, lover of my soul, let me to thy bosom fly;"

And up from that old arch, from that forsaken hovel, there fle a spirit, glad to bear the news to heaven, that another heir of glory was born to God. I might picture many such scenes; bu will each of you try to picture your own? You remember the occasion when the Lord met with you. Ah! little did you think what a commotion there was in heaven. If the Queen had ordered out all her soldiers, the angels of heaven would not have stopped to notice them; if all the princes of earth had marched in pageant through the streets, with all their robes, and jewellery, and crowns, and all their regalia, their chariots, and their horsemen—if the pomps of ancient monarchies had risen from the tomb—if all the might of Babylon, and Tyre, and Greece had been concentrated into one great parade, yet not an angel would have stopped in his course to smile at those poor tawdry things; but over you, the vilest of the vile, the poorest of the poor, the most obscure and unknown—over you angelic wings were hovering, and concerning you it was said on earth and sung in heaven, "Hallelujah, for a child is born to God to-day."

III. And now I must conclude with this LESSON TO THE SAINTS. I think, beloved, it will not be hard for you to learn. The angels of heaven rejoice over sinners that repent: saints of God, will not you and I do the same? I do not think the church rejoices enough. We all grumble enough and groan enough; but very few of us rejoice enough. When we take a large number into the church it is spoken of as a great mercy; but is the greatness of that mercy appreciated? I will tell you who they are that can most appreciate the conversion of sinners. They are those that are just converted themselves, or those that have been great sinners themselves. Those who have been saved themselves from bondage, when they see others coming who have so lately worn the chains, are so glad that they can well take the tabret, and the harp, and the pipe, and the psaltery, and praise God that

there are other prisoners who have been emancipated by grace. But there are others who can do this better still, and they are the parents and relations of those who are saved. You have thanked God many times when you have seen a sinner saved; but, mother, did not you thank him most when you saw your son converted? Oh! those holy tears; they are not tears—they are God's diamonds—the tears of a mother's joy, when her son confesses his faith in Jesus. Oh! that glad countenance of the wife, when she sees her husband, long bestial and drunken, at last made into a man and a Christian! Oh! that look of joy which a young Christian gives, when he sees his father converted, who had long oppressed and persecuted him. I was preaching this week for a young minister, and being anxious to know his character, I spoke of him with apparent coolness to an estimable lady of his congregation. In a very few moments she began to warm in his favor. She said, "You must not say any thing against him, sir; if you do, it is because you do not know him." "Oh," I said, "I knew him long before you did; he is not much, is he?" "Well," she said, "I must speak well of him, for he has been a blessing to my servants and family." I went out into the street, and saw some men and women standing about; so I said to them, "I must take your minister away." "If you do," they said, "we will follow you all over the world, if you take away a man who has done so much good to our souls." After collecting the testimony of fifteen or sixteen witnesses, I said, "If the man gets such witnesses as these let him go on; the Lord has opened his mouth, and the devil will never be able to shut it." These are the witnesses we want—men who can sing with the angels because their own households are converted to God. I hope it may be so with all of you; and if any of you are yourselves brought to Christ to-day—for he is willing to receive you—you will go out of this place singing, and the angels will sing with you. There shall be joy in earth, and joy in heaven; on earth peace, and glory to God in the highest. The Lord bless you, one and all, for Jesus' sake.

SERMON IV.

THE CONVERSION OF SAUL OF TARSUS.

"And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying, in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks."—Acts, xxvi. 14.

How marvellous the condescension which induced the Saviour to take notice of such a wretch as Saul! Enthroned in the highest heavens, amidst the eternal melodies of the redeemed, and the seraphic sonnets of the cherubim and all the angelic hosts, it was strange that the Saviour should stoop himself from his dignity to speak to a persecutor. Engaged as he is both day and night in pleading the cause of his own church before his Father's throne, it is condescension indeed which could induce him, as it were, to suspend his intercessions, in order that he might speak personally to one who had sworn himself his enemy. And what grace was it that could lead the Saviour's heart to speak to such a man as Saul, who had *breathed out* threatenings against his church? Had he not haled men and women to prison? had he not compelled them in every synagogue to blaspheme the name of Jesus Christ? and now Jesus himself must interpose to bring him to his senses! Ah, had it been a thunderbolt which quivered in its haste to reach the heart of man, we should not have marvelled, or had the lips of the Saviour been heaving with a curse we should not have been astonished. Had he not himself in his own lifetime cursed the persecutor? Did he not say, whosoever shall offend one of the least of these my little ones, it were better for him that a mill stone were hanged about his neck, and that he were cast in the

sea? But now the man that is cursed by that language is yet to be blessed by him whom he had persecuted; who though he had stained his hand in blood, and had now the commission in his hands to drag others to prison, though he had kept the clothes of those who had stoned Stephen, yet the Master, the King of heaven, must himself speak from the upper skies to bring him to feel the need of a Saviour, and to make him partaker of precious faith. I say this is marvellous condescension and matchless grace. But, beloved, when we come to recollect the Saviour's character, it is but little wonderful that he should do this for he has done far more than this. Did he not in person leave the starry thrones of heaven, and come down to earth to suffer, and bleed, and die? But when I think of Bethlehem's manger, of the cruel garden of Gethsemane, and the yet more shameful Calvary, I do not wonder that the Saviour should do any act of grace or condescension. That being done, what can be greater? If he hath stooped from heaven into hades, what greater stoop can he accomplish? If his own throne must be left empty, if his own crown must be relinquished, if his Godhead must be veiled in flesh, and the splendors of his deity clothed in the rags of manhood, what wonder, I say, that he should stoop to speak even to Saul of Tarsus, to bring his heart to himself? Beloved, some of us do not wonder either, for although we have not had greater grace than the apostle himself we have had no less. The Saviour did not speak out of heaven to us with a voice that others might hear, but he spoke with a voice that our conscience heard. We were not blood-thirsty, it may be, against his children, but we had sins both black and heinous; yet he stopped us. Not content with wooing us or with threatening us, not content with sending his ministers to us and giving us his word to warn us of duty, he would come himself And you and I, beloved, who have tasted of this grace, can say i was matchless love that saved Paul, but not love unexampled; for he hath saved us also, and made us partakers of the same grace.

I intend, this morning, to address myself more particularly to those who *fear not* the Lord Jesus Christ, but, on the contrary, oppose him. I think I may be quite certain that I have none here who go the length of desiring to see the old persecution of

the church revived. I do not think there is an Englishman, however much he may hate religion, who would wish to see the stake again in Smithfield, and the burning pile consuming the saints. There may be some who hate them as much, but still not in that fashion; the common sense of the age reviles against the gibbet, the sword, and the dungeon. The children of God, in this country at least, are quite safe from any political persecution of that kind; but it is highly probable that I have here this morning some who go to the full length of their tether, and who endeavor, as much as lieth in them, to provoke the Lord to anger by opposing his cause. You will perhaps recognize yourselves if I try to paint a picture. It is seldom that you ever go into the house of God; in fact, you have a contempt for all the gatherings of the righteous; you have a notion that all saints are hypocrites, that all professors are cants, and you do not at times blush to say so. However, you have a wife, and that wife of yours has been impressed under the sound of the ministry; she loves to go to the house of God, and heaven and her heart alone know what grief and agony of mind you have caused her. How often have you taunted and jeered her on account of her profession! You cannot deny but that she is a better woman for it; you are obliged to confess, that although she cannot go with you in all your sports and merriments, yet as far as she can go she is a loving and affectionate wife to you. If any one should find fault with her, you would right manfully defend her character; but it is her religion that you hate; and it is but lately that you threatened to lock her up on Sunday. You say it is impossible for you to live in the house with her if she will go up to the house of God. Moreover, there is a little child of yours; you had no objection to that child going to the Sunday-school, because she was out of your way on the Sunday when you were smoking your pipe in your shirt sleeves; you did not want to be bothered with your children, you said, and therefore you were glad to pack them off to the Sunday-school; but that child has had her heart touched; and you cannot help seeing that the religion of Christ is in her heart, therefore you do not like it; you love the child, but you would give any thing if she were not what she is; you would give any thing if you could crush the

last spark of religion out of her. But perhaps I can put your case yet. You are a master; you occupy a respectable position, you have many men under you, you cannot bear a man to make a profession of religion. Other masters you know have said to their men, "Do as you like, so long as you are a good servant, I do not care about your religious views." But mayhap you are little the reverse; although you would not turn a man away because of his religion, you give him a jeer every now and then and if you trip him up in a little fault, you say, "Ah! that is your religion; I suppose you learned that at the chapel;" grieving the poor man's soul, while he endeavors as far as he can to discharge his duty to you. Or, you are a young man, employed in a warehouse or a shop, and there is one of your shopmates who has lately taken to religion; he is to be found on his knees in prayer—what fine fun you have made of him lately, haven't you? You and others have joined in like a pack of hounds after a poor hare, and he being of rather a timid turn of mind, perhaps is silent before you, or if he speaks, the tear is in his eye, because you have wounded his spirit. Now this is the selfsame spirit that kindled the firebrand of old; that stretched the saint upon the rack; that cut his body in pieces, and sent him to wander about in sheep-skins and in goat-skins. If I have not exactly hit your character yet, I may do it before I have done. I wish to address myself especially to those of you, who in word or deed, or in any other manner, persecute the children of God; or if you do not like so hard a word as "persecute," laugh at them, opposing them, and endeavor to put an end to the good work in their hearts.

I shall, in the name of Christ, first *put the question to you.* "*Saul, Saul why persecutest thou me?*" In the second place, I shall in Christ's name *expostulate with you*, "*It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks;*" and then if God shall bless what is said to the teaching of your heart, it may be that the Master shall give you a *few words of comfort*, as he did the apostle Paul, when he said, "Rise, and stand upon thy feet; for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee."

I. In the first place, then, we will consider THE QUESTION, WHICH JESUS CHRIST PUT OUT OF HEAVEN TO PAUL. has been put to you this morning.

First, notice what a personal question it was, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest *thou* me?" When I preach to you, I am obliged to address you all as an assembly; it is not possible for me, except on rare occasions, to single out an individual, and describe his character, although under the hand of the Spirit it is sometimes done; but in the main I am obliged to describe the character as a whole, and deal with it in the mass. But not so our Master; he did not say out of heaven, "Saul, why does the synagogue persecute me? Why do the Jews hate my religion?" No; it was put more pertinently than that—"Saul, Saul, why persecutest *thou* me?" If it had been put in general terms, it would have glanced off from the heart of the apostle; it would have been like an arrow which had missed the mark, and barely grazed the skin of the man in whose heart it was intended to find a home; but when it came personally—"Why persecutest *thou* me?"—there was no getting off it. I pray the Lord to make the question personal to some of you. There be many of us here present who have had personal preaching to our souls. Do you not remember, dear brother in Christ, when you were first pricked in the heart, how personal the preacher was? I remember it well. It seemed to me that I was the only person in the whole place, as if a black wall were round about me, and I were shut in with the preacher, something like the prisoners at the Penitentiary, who each sit in their box and can see no one but the chaplain. I thought all he said was meant for me; I felt persuaded that some one knew my character, and had written to him and told him all, and that he had personally picked me out. Why, I thought he fixed his eyes on me; and I have reason to believe he did, but still he said he knew nothing about my case. Oh, that men would hear the word preached, and that God would so bless them in their hearing, that they might feel it to have a personal application to their own hearts.

But note again—the Apostle received some information as to the persecuted one. If you had asked Saul who it was he persecuted, he would have said, "Some poor fishermen, that had

been setting up an impostor; I am determined to put them down. Why, who are they? They are the poorest of the world; the very scum and draff of society; if they were princes and kings we perhaps might let them have their opinion: but these poor miserable, ignorant fellows, I do not see why they are to be allowed to carry out their infatuation, and I shall persecute them. Moreover, most of them are women I have been persecuting—poor ignorant creatures. What right have they to set their judgment up above the priests? They have no right to have an opinion of their own, and therefore it is quite right for me to make them turn away from their foolish errors." But see in what a different light Jesus Christ puts it. He does not say, "Saul, Saul, why didst thou persecute Stephen?" or "Why art thou about to drag the people of Damascus to prison?" No—"Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou *me?*" Did you ever think of it in that light? You have got a poor man who works for you, who wears a fustian jacket. He is nobody. You may laugh at him. He will not tell anybody, or even if he does, you will not be called to book about it, because he is nobody. You dare not laugh so at a duke or an earl. You would mind your behavior if you were in such company as that; but because this is a poor man, you think you have a license given you to laugh at his religion. But remember, that beneath the fustian jacket there is Jesus Christ himself. Inasmuch as you have done this unto one of the least of his brethren, you have done it unto him. Has the thought ever struck you, that when you laughed, you were laughing, not at him, but at his Master? Whether it struck you or not, it is a great truth, that Jesus Christ takes all the injuries which are done to his people as if they had been done to him. You locked your wife out the other night, did you, because she would frequent the house of God? When she stood there shivering in the midnight air, or entreating you to let her in, if your eyes had been wide open, you would have seen the Lord of life and glory shivering there, and he might have said to you, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou *me?*" And then you would have seen it to have been a very much greater sin than you imagine it now to be. You laughed at a little child the other day, because the child sang its simple hymn, and evidently sang it from its heart.

Did you know,—or if you did not know it then, know it now,—did you know that you were laughing at Christ; that when you mocked her, you were mocking her Master, and that Jesus Christ has set down that laugh in his great book, as an indignation done to his own real person. "Why persecutest thou *me?*" If ye could see Christ enthroned in heaven, reigning there in the splendors of his majesty, would ye laugh at him? If ye could see him sitting on his great throne, coming to judge the world, would ye laugh at him? Oh! as all the rivers run into the sea, so all the streams of the churches suffering run into Christ. If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth; and if the Christian's heart be full of woes, it empties itself into the breast of Jesus. Jesus is the great reservoir of all his people's woes, and by laughing at his people, you help to fill that reservoir to its brim; and one day will it burst in the fury of its might, and the floods shall sweep you away, and the sand foundation upon which your house is builded shall give way, and then what shall ye do when ye shall stand before the face of him whose person ye have mocked, and whose name ye have despised?

We will put the question in another way; it is a very reasonable one, and seems to demand an answer. "Saul, Saul, *why* persecutest thou me?" "Saul," the Master might have said "what have I done to hurt thee? When I was on earth did I say a word against thy character?—did I damage thy reputation?—did I injure thy person?—did I ever grieve thee?—did I ever say a hard word against thee? What hurt have I ever done thee? Why art thou so provoked against me? If I had been thy bitterest enemy, and had spit in thy face, thou couldst not have been more wroth with me than now. But why, man, wilt thou be angry against one who has never hurt thee—who has never done thee a displeasure? Oh! why persecutest thou me? Is there any thing in my character that deserves it? Was I not pure, and holy, and separate from sinners? Did I not go about doing good? I raised the dead; I healed the lepers; I fed the hungry; I clothed the naked; for which of these works dost thou hate me? Why persecutest thou me?" The question comes home to you in the same manner this morning. Ah! man, why dost thou per

secute Christ? He puts it to thee. What hurt has he ever done thee? Has Christ ever despoiled you, robbed you, injured you in any way whatever? Has his gospel in any way whatever taken away the comforts of life from you, or done you any damage? You dare not say that. If it were the Mormonism of Joe Smith, I wonder not that you should persecute it, though, even then, you would have no right to do so, for that might take the wife of your bosom from you. If it were a filthy and lustful system that would undermine the foundations of society, you might think yourself right in persecuting it. But has Christ ever taught his disciples to rob you, to cheat you, to curse you? Does not his doctrine teach the very reverse, and are not his followers, when they are true to their Master and themselves, the very reverse of this? Why hate a man who has done you no injury? Why hate a religion that does not interfere with you? If you will not follow Christ yourself, how does it injure you to let others do so? You say it injures your family; prove it, sir. Has it injured your wife? Does she love you less than before? Is she less obedient? You dare not say that. Has it hurt your child? Is your child less reverent to his father because he fears God? Is he less fond of you because he loves his Redeemer best of all? In what respect has Christ ever hurt any of you? He has fed you with the bounties of his providence. The clothes you wear to-day are the gifts of his bounty. The breath in your nostrils he has preserved to you, and will you curse him for this? It was but the other day that an avenging angel seized the axe, and the Master said, "Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?" And Jesus came and put his hand upon the angel's arm, and said, "Stay, stay yet another year, until I have digged about it and dunged it." Your life was spared by him, and you curse him for this; you blaspheme him because he has spared your life, and spend the breath which his own grace has given you, in cursing the God that allows you to breathe. You little know from how many dangers Christ, in his providence, protects you. You can little guess how numerous the mercies which, unseen by you, are poured into your lap every hour. And yet, for mercies innumerable, for grace that cannot be stopped by your iniquity, for love that cannot be overpowered by your injuries

do you curse the Saviour for all this? Base ingratitude! Truly, ye have hated him without a cause; ye have persecuted him, though he has loved you, and has done nought to injure you.

But let me picture the Master to you once more, and methinks you will never, never persecute him again, if you do but see him. Oh, if you could but see the Lord Jesus, you must love him; if you did but know his worth, you could not hate him! He was more beautiful than all the sons of men. Persuasion sat upon his lips, as if all the bees of eloquence had brought their honey there, and made his mouth the hive. He spake—and so did he speak, that if a lion had heard him, it would have crouched and licked his feet. Oh, how loving was he in his tenderness! Remember that prayer of his when the iron was piercing his hand—"Father, forgive them." You never heard him, all his life long, once saying an angry word to those who persecuted him. He was reviled, but he reviled not again. Even when he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, he was dumb before his shearers, and he opened not his mouth. But though fairer than the sons of men, both in person and in character, yet he was the Man of Sorrows. Grief had ploughed his brow with her deepest furrows. His cheeks were sunken and hollow with agony. He had fasted many a day, and often had he thirsted. He toiled from morning to night; then spent all night in prayer; then rose again to labor—and all this without reward—with no hope of getting any thing from any man. He had no house, no home, no gold, no silver. Foxes had holes, and the birds of the air had nests, but he, the Son of Man, had not where to lay his head. He was the persecuted man, hunted by his enemies from place to place, with scarce a friend to help him. Oh, had ye seen him; had ye seen his loveliness and his misery united; had ye seen his kindness, and yet the cruelty of his enemies, your hearts must have melted—you would have said, "No, Jesus, can not persecute thee! No, I will stand between thee and the burning sunshine. If I cannot be thy disciple, yet at any rate I will not be thy opposer. If this cloak can shelter thee in thy midnight wrestlings, there it is; and if this waterpot can draw thee water from the well, I will let it down, and thou shalt have enough; for if I love thee not, since thou art so poor, so sad, and

so good, I cannot hate thee. No, I will not persecute thee!" But though I feel certain, if you could see Christ, you must say this, yet have you really persecuted him in his disciples, in the members of his spiritual body, and I therefore put to you the question, "Saul, Saul, *why* persecutest thou me?" God help you to answer that question, and the answer must be shame and confusion of face.

II. This shall bring me to the second point—EXPOSTULATION. "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." There is a figure here; there is an allusion to the ox goad. When the ox was yoked for ploughing, if he did not move on in as sprightly a manner as was desired, the husbandman pricked him with a long rod that ended with an iron point. Very likely, as soon as the ox felt the goad, instead of going on, he struck out as hard as he could behind him. He kicked against the goad, sending the iron deep into his own flesh. Of course, the husbandman, who was guiding him, kept his goad there still, and the more frequently the ox kicked, the more he was hurt. But go he must. He was in the hand of man, who must and will rule the beast. It was just his own option to kick as long as he pleased, for he did no harm to his driver, but only to himself. You will see that there is a beauty in this figure, if I pull it to pieces, and ask you a question or two.

It is hard for you to kick against the goad; for, in the first place, you do not really accomplish your purpose. When the ox kicks against the goad, it is to spite the husbandman for having goaded him onward; but, instead of hurting the husbandman, it hurts itself. And when you have persecuted Christ, in order to stop the progress of his gospel, let me ask you, have you ever stopped it at all? No; and ten thousand like you would not be able to stop the mighty onward rush of the host of God's elect. If thou thinkest, O man, that thou canst stop the progress of Christ's church, go thou and first bind the sweet influences of the Pleiades, and bid the universe stand still instead of circling round those fair stars! Go, stand by the winds, and bid them cease their wailing, or take thy station upon a hoary cliff, and bid the roaring sea roll back when its tide is marching on the beach; and when thou hast stopped the universe, when sun, moon, and

stars have been obedient to thy mandate, when the sea hath heard thee and obeyed thee, then come forth and stop the omnipotent progress of the church of Christ. But thou canst not do it. "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us." But what said the Almighty? He did not even get up to combat with them. "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion." The church cares not for all the noise of the world. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore, will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar, and be troubled, and though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof." Ah, in your hosts ye have not prevailed, and think ye, O puny man, that, one by one, ye shall be able to conquer? Your wish may be strong enough, but your wish can never be accomplished. You may desire it anxiously, but you shall never attain thereto.

But put it as a personal matter, have you ever succeeded in stopping the work of grace in the heart of any one? You tried to laugh it out of your wife, but if she really was converted, you never would laugh it out of her. You may have tried to vex your little child; but, if grace be in that child, I defy you and your master, the devil, to get it out. Ay, young man, you may laugh at your shopmate, but he will beat you in the long run. He may sometimes be abashed, but you never will turn him. If he is a hypocrite you will, and, perhaps, there will be no great loss; but, if he be a true soldier of Christ, he can bear a great deal more than the laugh of an empty-headed being like yourself. You need not for a moment flatter yourself that he will be afraid of you. He will have to endure a greater baptism of suffering than that, and he will not be cowed by the first shower of your poor, pitiful, malicious folly. And as for you, sir merchant, you may persecute your man, but see if you will get him to yield. Why, I know a man whose master had tried very hard to make

him go against his conscience; but he said, "No, sir." And the master thought, "Well, he is a very valuable servant; but I will beat him, if I can." So he threatened that if he did not do as he wished he would turn him away. The man was dependent on his master, and he knew not what he should do for his daily bread. So he said to his master honestly at once, "Sir, I don't know of any other situation; I should be very sorry to leave you, for I have been very comfortable, but if it comes to that, sir, I would sooner starve than submit my conscience to any one." The man left, and the master had to go after him to bring him back again. And so it will be in every case. If Christians are but faithful, they must win the day. It is no use your kicking against them; you cannot hurt them. They must, they shall be conquerors through him that hath loved them.

But there is another way of putting it. When the ox kicked against the goad, he got no good by it. Kick as he might, he was never benefited by it. If the ox had stopped and nibbled a blade of grass or a piece of hay, why, then he would have been wise, perhaps, in standing still; but to stand still simply to be goaded and to kick, simply to have iron stuck into your flesh, is a rather foolish thing. Now, I ask you, what have you ever got by opposing Christ? Suppose you say you don't like religion, what have you ever got by hating it? I will tell you what you have got. You have got those red eyes sometimes on the Monday morning, after the drunkenness of the Sunday night. I will tell you what you have got, young man. You have got that shattered constitution, which, even if you had now turned it to the paths of virtue, must hang about you till you leave it in your grave. What have you got? Why, there are some of you who might have been respectable members of society, who have got that old broken hat, that old ragged coat, that drunken, slouched manner about you, and that character that you would like to let down and run away from, for it is no good to you. That is what you have got by opposing Christ. What have you got by opposing him? Why, a house without furniture—for through your drunkenness you have had to sell every thing of value you had. You have got your children in rags, and your wife in misery, and your eldest daughter, perhaps, running into shame, and your

son rising up to curse the Saviour, as yourself have done. What have you got by opposing Christ? What man in all the world ever got any thing by it? There is a serious loss sustained, but as for gain, there is nothing of the sort.

But you say, though you have opposed Christ, still you are moral. Again I will put it to you. Have you ever got any thing even then by opposing Christ? Has it made your family any the happier, do you think? Has it made you any the happier yourself? Do you feel after you have been laughing at your wife, or your child, or your man, that you can sleep any the sounder? Do you feel *that* to be a thing which will quiet your conscience when you come to die? Remember, you must die; and do you think that when you are dying, it will afford you any consolation to think that you did your best to destroy the souls of other people? No; you must confess it is a poor game. You are getting no good by it, but you are doing yourself a positive injury. Ah, drunkard, go on with your drunkenness, remember that every drunken fit leaves a plague behind it that you will have to feel one day. It is pleasant to sin to-day, but it will not be pleasant to reap the harvest of it to-morrow; the seeds of sin are sweet when we sow them, but the fruit is frightfully bitter when we come to house it at last. The wine of sin tasteth sweet when it goeth down, but it is as gall and vinegar in the bowels. Take heed, ye that hate Christ and oppose his gospel, for as certainly as the Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and his religion is true, you are heaping on your head a load of injury, instead of deriving good. "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks."

But kick as the ox might, it had to go forward at last. We have seen a horse stand still in the street, and the driver, who had not very much patience with him, has so belabored him, that we wondered how the poor horse could stand still under such a torrent of blows; but we have observed at last that the horse is obliged to go on, and we wondered what he got by standing still. It is just the same with you. If the Lord means to make a Christian out of you, you may kick against Christianity, but he will have you at last. If Jesus Christ intends your salvation you

may curse him, but he will make you preach his gospel one day if he likes to do so. Ah, if Christ had willed it, Voltaire, who cursed him, might have made a second apostle Paul. He could not have resisted sovereign grace, if Christ had so determined If any one had told the apostle Paul when he was going to Damascus, that he would one day become a preacher of Christianity, he would, no doubt, have laughed at it as ridiculous nonsense; but the Lord had the key of his will, and he wound it up as he pleased. And so it will be with you—if he has determined to have you as one of his followers—

> "If, as the eternal mandate ran,
> Almighty grace arrest that man."—

Almighty grace will arrest you, and the bloodiest of persecutors will be made the boldest of saints. Then why persecutest thou me? Perhaps you are despising the very Saviour you will one day love; trying to knock down the very thing that you will one day try to build up. Mayhap you are persecuting the men you will call your brothers and sisters. It is always well for a man not to go so far that he cannot go back respectably. Now do not go too far in opposing Christ, for one of these times it may be you will be very glad to come crouching at his feet. But there is this sad reflection, if Christ does not save you, still you must go on. You may kick against the pricks, but you cannot get away from his dominion; you may kick against Christ, but you cannot cast him from his throne; you cannot drag him out of heaven. You may kick against him, but you cannot prevent his condemning you at last. You may laugh at him, but you can not laugh away the day of judgment. You may scoff at religion, but all your scoffs cannot put it out. You may jeer at heaven, but all your jeers will not take one single note from the harps of the redeemed. No, the thing is just the same as if you did not kick; it makes no difference except to yourself. Oh, how foolish must you be, to persevere in a rebellion which is harmful to none but your own soul; which is not injurious to him whom you hate, but which, if he pleases, he can stop, or if he doth not stop, he can and will revenge.

III. And now I close up by addressing myself to some here

whose hearts are already touched. Do you this morning feel your need of a Saviour? Are you conscious of your guilt in having opposed him, and has the Holy Spirit made you willing now to confess your sins? Are you saying, "Lord, have mercy upon me a sinner?" Then I have GOOD NEWS for you. Paul, who persecuted Christ, was forgiven. He says he was the very chief of sinners, but he obtained mercy. So shall you. Nay, more; Paul not only obtained mercy, he obtained honor. He was made an honored minister to preach the gospel of Christ, and so may you. Yes, if thou repentest, Christ may make use of you to bring others to him. It strikes me with wonder when I see how many of the very greatest of sinners have become the most useful of men. Do you see John Bunyan yonder? He is cursing God. He goes into the belfry and pulls the bell on Sunday, because he likes the bell-ringing; but when the church door is open, he is playing bowls upon the village green. There is the village tap, and there is no one that laughs so loud there as John Bunyan. There are some people going to the meeting-house; there is no one curses them so much as John. He is a ringleader in all vice. If there is a hen-roost to be robbed, Jack's your man. If there is any iniquity to be done, if there is any evil in the parish, you need not guess twice, John Bunyan is at the bottom of it. But who is it stands there in the dock before the magistrate? Who is it I heard just now—"If you will let me out of prison to-day, I will preach the gospel to-morrow, by the help of God?" Who was it that lay twelve years in prison, and when they said he might go out if he would promise not to preach, replied, "No, I will be here till the moss grows on mine eyelids, but I must and will preach God's gospel as soon as I have liberty?" Why, that is John Bunyan, the very man who cursed Christ the other day. A ringleader in vice has become the glorious dreamer, the very leader of God's hosts. See, what God did for him, and what God did for him he will do for you, if now you repent and seek the mercy of God in Christ Jesus.

"He is able, he is willing, doubt no more."

Oh! I trust I have some here who have hated God, but who are nevertheless God's elect; some that have despised him, but who

are bought with blood; some that have kicked against the pricks, but yet almighty grace will bring them onward. There are some here, I doubt not, who have cursed God to his face, who shall one day sing hallelujahs before his throne; some that have indulged in lusts all but bestial, who shall one day wear the white robe, and move their fingers along the golden harps of the glorified spirits in heaven. Happy is it to have such a gospel to preach to such sinners! To the persecutor Christ is preached. Come to Jesus whom thou hast persecuted.

"Come, and welcome, sinner, come."

And now bear with me one moment if I address you yet again. The probability stares me in the face that I may have but very few more opportunities of addressing you upon subjects that concern your soul. My hearers, I shall arrogate nothing to myself but this one thing—"I have not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God," and God is my witness with how many sighs, and tears, and prayers, I have labored for your good. Out of this place I believe thousands have been called; among you whom I now see there is a large number of converted persons; according to your own testimony you have had a thorough change, and you are not now what you were. But I am conscious of this fact, that there are many of you who have attended here now almost these two years, who are just what you were when you first came. There are some of you whose hearts are not touched. You sometimes weep, but still your lives have never been changed; you are yet "in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity." Well, sirs, if I never address you again, there is one favor that I would crave of you. If you will not turn to God, if you are determined to be lost, if you will not hear my rebuke, nor turn at my exhortation, I ask this one favor; at least let me know, and let me have this confidence, that I am clear of your blood. I think you must confess this. I have not shunned to preach of hell with all its horrors, until I have been laughed at, as if I always preached upon it. I have not shunned to preach upon the most sweet and pleasing themes of the gospel, till I have feared lest I should make my preaching effeminate, instead of retaining the masculine vigor of a Boanerges. I have not shunned to preach

the law; that great commandment has wrung in your ears, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." I have never feared the great, nor have I courted their smile; I have rebuked nobility as I would rebuke the peasantry, and to every one of you I have dealt a portion of meat in due season. I know that this much can be said of me—"Here stands one that never feared the face of man yet;" and I hope never will. Amidst contumely, and rebuke, and reproach, I have sought to be faithful to you and to my God. If, then, you will be damned, let me have this one thing as a consolation for your misery, when I shall think of so frightful a thought—that you are not damned for the want of calling after; you are not lost for the want of weeping after, and not lost, let me add, for the want of praying after. In the name of him who shall judge the quick and dead according to my Gospel, and of him that shall come in the clouds of heaven, and by that fearful day when the pillars of this earth shall totter, and the heavens shall fall about your ears—by that day when "Depart, ye cursed," or "Come, ye blessed," must be the dread alternative, I charge you, lay these things to heart, and as I shall face my God to account for my honesty to you, and my faithfulness to him, so remember, you must stand before his bar, to give an account of how you heard, and how you acted after hearing; and woe unto you if, having been lifted up like Capernaum with privileges, you should be cast down like Sodom and Gomorrah, or lower still than they, because you repented not.

Oh Master! turn sinners to thyself; for Jesus' sake! Amen.

SERMON V.

DISTINGUISHING GRACE.

"For who maketh thee to differ from another?"—1 Corinthians, iv. 7.

Or, as it is in the Greek: "For who distinguisheth thee?" "Who giveth thee distinguishing and discriminating mercy?" "Who maketh thee to differ from another?" Pride is the inherent sin of man, and yet it is of all sins the most foolish. A thousand arguments might be used to show its absurdity; but none of these would be sufficient to quench its vitality. Alive it is in the heart, and there it will be, till we die to this world and rise again without spot or blemish. Yet many are the arrows which may be shot at the heart of our boasting. Take, for instance, the argument of creation; how strongly that thrusts at our pride. There is a vessel upon the potter's wheel, would it not be preposterous for that clay which the potter fashioneth to boast itself and say, "How well am I fashioned! how beautifully am I proportioned; I deserve much praise!" Why, O lump of clay, whatever thou art, the potter made thee; however elegant thy proportions, however matchless thy symmetry, the glory is due to him that made thee, not to thyself; thou art but the work of his hands. And so let us speak unto ourselves. We are the thing formed; shall we say of ourselves that we deserve honor because God hath formed us excellently and wondrously? No, the fact of our creation should extinguish the sparks of our pride. What are we, after all, but as grasshoppers in his sight, as drops of the bucket, as lumps of animated dust; we are but the infants of a day when we are most old; we are but the insects of an hour when we are most strong; we are but the wild ass's colt when we are most wise; we are but as folly and

vanity when we are most excellent—let that tend to humble us But surely if these prevail not to clip the pinions of our high soaring pride, the Christian man may at least bind its wings with arguments derived from the distinguishing love and peculiar mercies of God. "*Who maketh thee to differ from another?*"—This question should be like a dagger put to the throat of our boasting;—"and *what hast thou that thou didst not receive?*"—it would be like a sword thrust through the heart of our self-exaltation and pride.

We shall now for a moment or two endeavor to put down our pride by observing wherein God hath distinguished us and made us to differ, and then by noticing that all this cometh of him, and should be a reason for humiliation, and not for boasting.

1. Many of us differ from others in God's providential dealings towards us. Let us think a moment how many there are of God's precious and dearly beloved children, who at this moment are in the depths of poverty. They are not walking about in sheep-skins and in goat-skins, persecuted, afflicted, and tormented; but still they are hungry, and no man gives them to eat; they are thirsty, and no man furnishes them with drink, their lives are wasted in poverty, and their years in distress. Some there are of God's children who were once in affluence but have been suddenly plunged into the lowest depths of penury; they knew what it was to be respected among the sons of men, but now they are among the dogs of the flock, and no man careth for them. There are some of us who are here present who have all that heart can wish: God hath given us food and raiment, the lines have fallen unto us in pleasant places, and we have a goodly heritage. Let us gratefully ask—"Who maketh us to differ?" Let us recollect that all we have is the gift of his providence. Not to you, O my hands, do I sacrifice, because ye have toiled for bread; not to you, O ye brains, will I offer incense, because ye have thought for my daily livelihood; not to you, O my lips, will I offer my adulation, because ye have been the means of furnishing me with words. No; unto God, who giveth power to get, and to have, and to enjoy; unto him be all the praise for what he hath done for us. Never let our songs cease, for his goodness is an ever-flowing stream. Perhaps none of us can ever know, until

the great day shall reveal it, how much some of God's servants are tried. To this day they have "perils by land, and perils by sea, and perils by false brethren;" to this hour they are pinched by want, they are deserted by friends, they know what despondency means, and all the ill which dejection and disappointment can bring to them; they have dived into the lowest depths of the sea of trouble, and have walked for many a league over the hot sand of the desert of affliction. And if God hath delivered us from these things, and hath made our path more pleasant, and hath led us beside the still waters, and into the green pastures, if he hath distinguished us by the common gifts of his providence above many others of his children who are far better and far more holy than we what shall we say? It is owing only to his grace towards us, and we will not exalt ourselves above our fellows, we will not be high-minded, but condescend to men of low estate; we will not lift our necks with the proud, but we will bow down our brows with the humble; every man shall be called our brother, not merely those who are arrayed in goodly raiment, but those who are clothed in the habiliments of toil, they shall be confessed to be our kindred, sprung from the same stock; for what have we that we have not received, and what maketh us to differ from another? I wish that some of the stiff-necked gentry of our churches would at times recollect this. Their condition is smooth as oil, and as soft as young down, but their hearts are as high as poplars, and their manners as stiff as hedge-stakes. There have been many who would do well if they would learn that they have nothing beyond what God has given them. And the more God has given them, the more they are in debt. Why should a man boast because he is deeper in debt than another? Do the debtors in the Queen's Bench say to one another, "You are only a hundred pounds in debt, and I a thousand, therefore I am a greater gentleman than you?" I think not. But, nevertheless, if they did so, they would be as wise as men who boast beyond their fellow-creatures, because they happen to have more of rank, wealth, honor, and position in this world. "Who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive?"

But the best way for you to feel this part of the discourse is,

to go to-morrow into the hospital, and walk along the wards, and see how poor men's bodies suffer, and then go into the operating-room and see what flesh and blood may have to endure. Then when you have done, go round the neighborhood to see the sick who have lain for ten, or twelve, or fifteen years upon the same bed, and after that go and visit some of God's poverty-stricken children who just exist in this world, and it is but a bare existence, maintained on bread and butter and a little tea, and but too little of even such things as those. Go and see their poor, miserable, unfurnished rooms, their cellars and their attics, and that will be a better sermon to you than any thing I can utter. You will come home and say, "Oh, my God, I bless thee for thy kindness towards me. These temporal mercies which I once thought so little of, I must heartily bless thee for. I must thank thee for what thou hast given to me, and I will ascribe it all to thy love, for thou makest me to differ. I have nothing that I have not received."

2. But this is not the most important point for us to observe. We are now going to look at, not matters of providence, but the things of God's grace. Here it is that we who are now assembled as a church have most reason to bless God, and to say, "Who maketh us to differ from others?" Take, my dear friends, in your mind's eye the cases of the careless, the hardened, and the thoughtless, of even this present congregation. Side by side with you, my brother, there may sit a man, a woman, who is dead in trespasses and sins. To such the music of the gospel is like singing to a dead ear, and the dropping of the word is as dew upon a rock. There are many in this congregation whose position in society, and whose moral character are extremely excellent, and yet before God their state is awful. They attend the house of God as regularly as we do. They sing as we sing, sit as we sit, and come and go as we do, and yet are they without God and without hope in the world—strangers from the commonwealth of Israel, and aliens from the covenant of promise. Yet what maketh us to differ? Why is it that I this day am not sitting down a callous hearer, hardened under the gospel? Why am I not at this very hour hearing the Word with my outward ear but rejecting it in my inward heart? Why is it that I have

not been suffered to reject the invitation of Christ, to despise his grace—to go on, Sunday after Sunday, hearing the Word and yet being like the deaf adder to it. Oh, *have I made myself to differ?* God forbid that such a proud, blaspheming thought should defile our hearts. No, beloved:

> "'Twas the same love which spread the feast,
> That sweetly forced us in;
> Else we had still refused to taste,
> And perished in our sin."

The only reason, my brother, why thou art at this time an heir of God, a joint heir with Christ, a partaker of sweet fellowship with Jesus, an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven, is because HE hath made thee to differ. Thou wast an heir of wrath even as others, born in sin and shapen in iniquity. Therefore must thou give all the glory to his holy name, and cry—"Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name be all the praise." Even this one thought, when fully masticated and digested, might feed up our gratitude and make us humbly bow before the footstool of God's throne with joyful thanksgiving.

3. Will you please, however, to think of other cases? Who maketh thee to differ from others of this assembly who are more hardened than those to whom we have alluded? There are some men and women of whose salvation, if it were to be wrought by man, we must indeed utterly despair, for their hearts are harder than the most stubborn steel. The hammer of the Word makes no impression on such souls. The thunders of the law roll over their heads, but they can sleep in the midst of the tumult—the lightnings of Sinai flash against their hearts, but even those mighty flames seem as if they recoiled from the attack. Do you not know such? they are your own children, your husband, your wife, some of your own family; and as you look upon them, though you have longed, prayed, and wept, and sighed for their souls, you are compelled to say in your heart, "I half fear that I shall never see them converted." You say with sorrow, "Oh, if they are saved it will be a wonder of divine grace indeed. Surely they will never yield their souls to God. They seem as callous as if their conscience were scared with a hot iron; they appear to have

the stamp of condemnation upon their brow, as if they were marked and sealed, and had the earnest of the pit upon their hearts before they came there." Ay, but stop—"Who maketh thee to differ?" Why am I not at this day among the most hardened of men? How is it that my heart is melted so that I can weep at the recollection of the Redeemer's suffering? Why is it that my conscience is tender, and that I am led to a self-examination by a searching sermon? How is it that I know how to pray and to groan before God on account of sin? What has brought the water from these eyes but the self-same power which brought the water from the rock? And what hath put life into my heart but the self-same Omnipotence which scattered manna in a hungry desert? Our hearts had still been like the wild beasts of the forest if it had not been for Divine grace. Oh! I beseech you, my dear friend, every time you see a hardened sinner, just say within yourself, "There is the picture of what I should have been, what I must have been, if all-subduing, all-conquering love had not melted and sanctified my heart." Take these two cases, then, and you have, heaven knows, reason enough to sing to the praise of sovereign grace.

4. But now another. The lowest class of sinners do not mingle with our congregations, but are to be seen in our back streets and lanes, and sometimes in our highways. How frightful is the sin of drunkenness, which degrades a man into a beast, which sinks him lower than the brutes themselves? How shameful is the iniquity of blasphemy, which, without any object or any chance of profit, brings a curse upon its own head! How awful are the ways of the lascivious wretch who ruins both body and soul at once, and not content with his own destruction ruins others with him. Cases that come under our observation in the daily newspapers, and that assail us in our daily observation and hearing, are too vile to be told. How often is our blood chilled with the sound of an imprecation, and how frequently our heart is made to palpitate with the daring impieties of the blasphemous. Now let us stop: "Who maketh thee to differ?" Let us recollect that if we live very near to Christ, we should have lived quite as near to hell if it had not been for saving grace. Some of you here present are special witnesses of this grace, for you have

yourself experienced redemption from these iniquities. Look back some four years with some of you, and recollect how different were your surroundings then to what they are now. Mayhap four years ago you were in the tap-room singing the song of the drunkard as readily as any; but a little while ago you cursed that Saviour whom now you love. Only a few months have flitted over your head since you ran with the multitude to do evil, but now, "Who maketh thee to differ?" Who hath wrought this miracle of grace? Who has led you to the stool of the penitent and the table of communion—who hath done it? Beloved, you are not slow to answer, for the verdict of your heart is undivided; you do not give the glory in part to man and in part to God. No, you cry loudly in your hearts, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Ye are washed, ye are sanctified, and ye have been washed in the Redeemer's blood, and sancsanctified with the Spirit. Ye have been made to differ, and ye will confess it; ye have been made to differ by distinguishing grace, and distinguishing grace alone. And what upholds the rest of us from being what these my reclaimed brethren once were, and what they will become again unless saving grace keeps them? What preserves the preacher this day from being a lecturer to infidels, dishonoring the grace of God which now he glories to magnify? What prevents the deacon from being an assistant in the courts of Satan? What forbids those who open the doors at the house of our God, and who serve him on the Sabbath-day, from being door-keepers in the tents of the sons of Belial? Why nothing; they had been there unless *grace* had prevented them. Grace hath done it, and nothing else. When we pass a prostitute in the street, we say, "O poor creature! I can pity you. I have not a harsh word for you, for I had been as you are had not God preserved me." And when you see the reeling drunkard, be no too hasty to condemn, recollect you had been as a beast before God unless the Lord had kept you; and when ye hear the oath and shudder at it, imagine not that you are superior in yourself to the man who curses God, for perhaps you once cursed him too, and certainly you would have done had not the Holy Spirit sanc-

tified you and implanted in you a hatred of that which the wicked so greedily follow. Have you seen a man hanged for murder? Have you seen another transported for the most infamous of crimes? If you hear of one who sins against society so foully that mankind excommunicate him, pause and say, "Oh! but I should have gone as low as that, I should have been as black as he, unless restraining grace had kept me back in my unregeneracy, and unless constraining grace had pushed me forward in the heavenly race ever since I have known the will of Jesus."

5. And now we will pause again, and think over another evil which stares us in the face in connection with every church. There are most melancholy cases of backsliding in so large a church as this. We are compelled often to discover the character of men and women who once seemed fair for heaven, but who manifested that they never had the root of the matter in them. Oh! well did the poet say,—

> "When any turn from Zion's way,
> Alas! what numbers do!"

No trial is greater to the true minister than the apostacy of his flock. All the rage of men is quite unable to bring tears to our eyes, but this has done it. Alas! when those whom I have loved have turned aside from the way of God, when those who have sat with us at the same table, and have joined with us in church communion, have gone out from us, and have brought dishonor upon the Church, and upon the name of Christ, there has been woe in my inmost spirit. Sometimes there are cases as glaring as they are painful, and as vile as they are grievous. Some of those, who were once in the midst of God's sanctuary, have become drunkards and whoremongers—and God in heaven only knows what. They have sinned against every thing that is seemly, as well as every thing that is holy. At the recollection of these our eyes are filled with tears. "Oh that our head were waters, and our eyes fountains of tears, that we might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of our people." No mischief-makers are so powerful as deserters. None cause so much agony as those who have nestled beneath our wings, and then have flown away to feed with carrion vultures on the putrid carcasses of lust and sin.

But now let us pause. How is it that the minister has not forsaken his profession, and gone back like a dog to his vomit, and like the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire? How is it that the deacons of this church have not turned aside unto crooked ways, and denied the faith, and become worse than infidels? How is it that so many members of this church have been kept so that the wicked one toucheth them not? O beloved! I can say for myself, I am a continual miracle of divine grace. If thou leave me, Lord, for a moment, I am utterly undone.

"Leave, O leave me not alone!
Still support and comfort me."

Let Abraham be deserted by his God, he equivocates and denies his wife. Let Noah be deserted, he becomes a drunkard, and is naked to his shame. Let Lot be left awhile, and, filled with wine, he revels in incestuous embraces, and the fruit of his body becomes a testimony to his disgrace. Nay, let David, the man after God's own heart, be left, and Uriah's wife shall soon show the world that the man after God's own heart hath still an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. Oh! well doth the poet put it—

"Methinks I hear the Saviour say,
'Wilt thou forsake me too?'"

And now let our conscience answer:—

"Ah, Lord! with such a heart as mine,
Unless thou hold me fast,
I feel I must, I shall decline,
And prove like them at last."

Oh be not rashly self-confident, Christian man. Be as confident as you can in your God, but be distrustful of yourself. Ye may yet become all that is vile and vicious, unless sovereign grac prevent and keep you to the end. But remember, if you have been preserved, the crown of your keeping belongs to the Shepherd of Israel, and ye know who that is. For he hath said "I the Lord do keep it. I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day." "Ye know who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before his pres

ence with exceeding great joy." Then give all glory to the King immortal, invisible, the only wise God your Saviour, who has kept you thus.

6. Allow me one more contrast; once again let your gratitude go with me. Since you and I have joined the church how many who were once our companions have been damned whilst we have been saved! how many who were no worse than we were by nature have sunk into the lowest pit of hell! Conceive their unutterable torments; imagine their inconceivable woes; depict before the eye of your fancy their indescribable agonies! Descend in spirit for a moment to the gates of fire; enter into the abode of despair where justice reigns supreme on her iron throne; pass by the dreary cell of those who are everlastingly damned. Behold the twisting of that worm that never dies, and the bleeding hearts that are crushed within its coils! Look ye at that flame unquenchable, and behold the souls that are sweltering there in torments to us unknown, and look, if ye can look, but ye cannot look, for your eyes would be stricken with blindness if ye could see their torments. Your hair should be blanched with but a moment of that horrible exhibition. Ah! while you stand, then, and think on that region of death, despair, and damnation, recollect that you would have been there if it had not been for sovereign grace. You have a harp prepared for you in heaven, a crown laid up for you when you have finished your course. You have a mansion, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Oh, why is it you are not already a fiend? who is it that has given you a good hope through grace that you shall never come into that place of torment? Oh! tell it the wide world over. Tell it in time and eternity, *free grace* hath done it. Free grace hath done it from the first to the last. I was a brand in the fire, but he plucked me from the burning, quenched me in his blood, and now he declares I shall be with him for ever in heaven. But, oh! pause, brethren, and think that some of your former pot-companions, some of the companions of your revels and debaucheries are now in hell, and you are not there, and, by the grace of God, never will be there. Oh! why this, why this? Blessed be the Lord my God from this time forth and for ever. Praise ye his name. Grace has done it. Grace has done it all.

No, I ne'er shall wear the chain, I ne'er shall be stretched upon that rack, nor feel that fire—

> "But I shall see his face,
> And never, never sin,
> But from the rivers of his grace
> Drink endless pleasures in."

But I most confidently proclaim that the reason why I shall escape and shall be glorified, is not to be found in me, but in him. He hath made me to differ. I have nothing but what I have received.

Now what shall we say to these things? If God has made you to differ, the first prayer we should now utter should be, "Lord, humble us. Take away pride out of us. O God forgive us, that such beasts as we are should ever be proud." We might have been with our father the devil at this very hour, if it had not been for Divine love. And if we are now in the house of our Father which is in heaven shall we be proud? Avaunt, thou monster! Go and dwell with the Pharisee. Pride agreeth well enough with the man who has in his own esteem been always virtuous. Go thou away and live with him who has had good works from the first day until now; but away from *me*.

> "I the chief of sinners am,"

and, saved by sovereign grace, shall I be proud? It is not fit that thou shouldest live in my heart, thou monster! Begone! begone! Find a fitter habitation than my soul. Should I be proud after such mercy, after such ill-deserving, but such God-receiving? Begone, pride! Begone!

Another lesson: if God alone hath made us to differ, why may e not make others to differ too? "After the Lord saved me," said one, "I never despaired of anybody;" and let us each say so too. If you were brought in why not another? Will you ever give up praying for anybody now that you are saved? I once heard one say concerning his child, "I think I must give her up, I can scarcely think she ever will be converted." Why, you have been pardoned yourself; and if the Lord can do that, he

can do any thing. I am sure if the Lord has brought me to his feet there does not remain in the world a case that can equal mine; if he has brought me to receive his free grace, his sovereign love, his precious blood, and hath made me to love him, then there can be nothing too hard for him. O Lord, if thou hast melted this metal heart, and dissolved this stony soul, thou canst break any thing. If thou hast broken the northern iron and steel, then what remains beyond thy power? Go back, then, Christian, armed with this fact, that God who hath made thee to differ can make anybody to differ. There can be no case beyond his strength; if he brought you in he can bring all in. If he doth but stretch out his hand, no man need despair. Therefore, "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whither shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good."

Again, who hath made me to differ? Hath my Lord done it?—then let me serve him more than others. There was a question asked once by our Saviour, "What do ye more than others?" That question might well be put to each child of God here present. My dear friends, we must not be content with doing as much as other people do; in fact, we must never be contented with our doings at all, but always be trying to do more for him who hath done so much for us. Should I give my body to be burned, my flesh piecemeal to the knife, my nerves to the rack, and my heart to the spear, yet should I not give him all that he deserveth. No, if I should pass through the horrors of martyrdom, it were but a poor tribute to love so amazing, so divine. What are you doing, my friends; what are you doing, my brothers and sisters, for Christ? But I will not blame you, I censure myself if I censure you; but I will confess my own iniquities, and leave you to confess yours. I do try to serve my Master, but I do not serve him as I would. Each act that I perform is marred, either by want of prayer for a blessing upon it, by want of faith in my Lord, or by pride in looking back upon it. I find too continually a tendency to serve myself instead of serving Christ, a constant longing rather to get through the work than to do it acceptably

And oh! when I think upon all, I must say I am an unprofitable servant. Have mercy, O gracious Lord, on my good works as well as on my bad ones, for my good works are but bad in the best, and cannot be acceptable in themselves. I am certain some of you have a little more need to say that than I have. Let us cease boasting any more. I know there are some here who are not serving Christ; some members in this Church are doing nothing. You have not thought of doing any thing for Christ, have you? You pay your regular subscriptions, you do what you are told to do, but do you give to Christ secretly? do you devote your substance unto him when no one knows it? do you spend your time for him? have you chosen a sphere, and have you said, "This is my work, and, by the grace of God, I will do it." Oh! ye cannot tell how much there is to do, and how few there are to do it. I would I could have a church all alive, all active, so that there never could be a want but those who have would be ready to supply, and never a work but those who are qualified would be ready to fulfil. Never fear but we should find too many rather than too few to aid its accomplishment. Oh that we had the good spirit of the ancient church, the spirit to propagate our Christianity everywhere. There needs to be in many of the suburbs of London fresh gospel churches springing up. I can point to many places in my own vicinity, seven or eight, nine or ten in a row, where there is a chapel needed. In each place there are believers living, who do not think about uniting to establish a fresh cause; but as long as their peculiar wants are satisfied, by journeying a long way off perhaps, they forget the hundreds and thousands who are pressing around them. Oh! there is much to be done, and very little time to do it in. A very few weeks, and those of us who have been loved more than others, those of us who have thought we could wash Christ' feet with our tears, and wipe them with the hair of our heads, will have no more opportunities for spreading the name and fame of our glorious Redeemer. Let us give of our substance to his cause, give of our time to his service, and have our hearts in his love, and so shall we be blessed, for, in returning Christ's love, we shall feel that his love is shed abroad more fully in our hearts and more fully in our understandings.

May the Holy Spirit add his blessing upon these broken words—they have been broken because they have broken my heart, and therefore I could not help their coming out in a broken way. God accept them; and, dear brothers and sisters, may he bless them to you by helping you to love him more, who is my hope, my joy, my consolation, and my all.

SERMON VI.

THE MISSION OF THE SON OF MAN

"For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."—LUKE, xix. 10.

How fond our Master was of the sweet title, the "Son of Man!" If he had chosen, he might always have spoken of himself as the Son of God, the Everlasting Father, the Wonderful, the Counseller, the Prince of Peace. He hath a thousand gorgeous titles, resplendent as the throne of heaven; but he careth not to use them—to express his humility and let us see the lowliness of him whose yoke is easy and whose burden is light. He calls not himself the Son of God, but he speaks of himself evermore as the Son of Man who came down from heaven. Let us learn a lesson of humility from our Saviour; let us never court great titles nor proud degrees. What are they, after all, but beggarly distinctions whereby one worm is known from another? He that hath the most of them is a worm still, and is in nature no greater than his fellows. If Jesus called himself the Son of Man, when he had far greater names, let us learn to humble ourselves unto men of low estate, knowing that he that humbleth himself shall in due time be exalted. Methinks, however, there is a sweeter thought than this in that name, Son of Man. It seems to me that Christ loved manhood so much, that he always desired to honor it; and since it is a high honor, and indeed the greatest dignity of manhood, that Jesus Christ was the Son of Man, he is wont to display this name, that he may as it were put rich stars upon the breast of manhood, and put a crown upon its head. *Son of Man*—whenever he said that word he seemed to put a halo round the head of Adam's children. Yet there is perhaps a

more lovely thought still. Jesus Christ called himself the Son of Man, because he loved to be a man. It was a great stoop for him to come from heaven and to be incarnate. It was a mighty stoop of condescension when he left the harps of angels and the songs of cherubims to mingle with the vulgar herd of his own creatures. But condescension though it was, he loved it. You will remember that when he became incarnate he did not become so in the dark. When he bringeth forth the only begotten into the world, he saith, "Let all the angels of God worship him." It was told in heaven; it was not done as a dark secret which Jesus Christ would do in the night that none might know it; but all the angels of God were brought to witness the advent of a Saviour a span long, sleeping upon a Virgin's breast, and lying in a manger. And ever afterwards, and even now, he never blushed to confess that he was man; never looked back upon his incarnation with the slightest regret; but always regarded it with a joyous recollection, thinking himself thrice happy that he had ever become the Son of Man. All hail, thou blessed Jesus! we know how much thou lovest our race; we can well understand the greatness of thy mercy towards thy chosen ones, inasmuch as thou art evermore using the sweet name which acknowledges that they are bone of thy bone and flesh of thy flesh, and thou art one of them, a brother and a near kinsman.

Our text announces as a declaration of our Saviour, that he, the Son of Man, is come to seek and to save that which was lost. In addressing you this morning, I shall simply divide my discourse thus:—First, I shall lay it down as a self-evident truth, that *whatever was the intention of Christ in his coming into the world, that intention most certainly shall never be frustrated.* We shall then, in the second place, look into *the intention of Christ*, as announced in the text, viz., "to seek and to save that which was lost." Then, in concluding, we shall derive *a word of comfort*, and perhaps one of *warning*, from the intention of our Saviour in coming into the world "to seek and to save that which was lost."

I. You are aware that there has been a very great discussion amongst all Christians about the redemption of our Lord Jesus Christ. There is one class of men who believe in what is called

general redemption, affirming it to be an undoubted truth that Jesus Christ hath shed his blood for every man, and that the intention of Christ in his death was the salvation of men considered as a whole; they have, however, to overlook the fact that in this case Christ's intention would be frustrated in a measure. There are others of us who hold what is called the doctrine of *particular redemption*. We conceive that the blood of Christ was of an infinite value, but that the intention of the death of Christ never was the salvation of all men; for if Christ had designed the salvation of all men, we hold that all men would have been saved. We believe that the intention of Christ's death is just equal to its effects; and therefore I start this morning by announcing what I regard to be a self-evident truth, that whatever was the intention of Jesus Christ in coming into the world, that intention most certainly shall be fulfilled.

But I shall make use of a few arguments to strengthen this doctrine, although I believe that on the very first announcement it commends itself to every thinking mind.

In the first place, it seems to be *inconsistent with the very idea of God that he should ever intend any thing which should not be accomplished.* When I look at man I see him to be a creature so distracted with folly and so devoid of power, that I do not wonder that he often begins to build and is not able to finish; I do not marvel that full often he stops short because he hath not counted the cost: I wonder not, when I think how much there is that is above man's control, that he should sometimes propose but that God should dispose far differently from his proposition. I see man to be the insect of a day, a mere ephemera upon the bay-leaf of existence; and when I see him as a mere drop in the great sea of creation, I do not wonder that when he is ambitious he sometimes fashions in himself great designs which he is unable to accomplish, because the wheels of providence and destiny will often run quite contrary to all the frolic of his will. But when I think of God whose name is, "I am that I am," the self-existent one, in whom we live and move and have our being, who is from everlasting to everlasting, the Almighty God; when I think of him as filling immensity, having all power and strength, knowing all things, having a fulness of wisdom, I cannot associ

ate with such an idea of God the supposition of his ever failing in any of his intentions. It would seem to me that a God who could intend a thing and fail in his intention would be no God, but be a thing like ourselves, perhaps superior in strength, but certainly not entitled to worship. I cannot anyhow think of God, of a true and real God like Jehovah, except as a being who wills and it is accomplished, who speaks and it is done, who commands and it stands fast, for ever, settled in heaven. I cannot therefore imagine, since Jesus Christ was the Son of God, that in his atonement and redemption, his real intention and desire can in any way be frustrated. If I were a Socinian and believed Jesus Christ to be a mere man, I could of course imagine, that the result of his redemption would be uncertain; but believing that Jesus Christ was very God of very God, equal and co-eternal with the Father, I dare not, lest I should be guilty of presumption and blasphemy, associate with that name of Jehovah Jesus any suspicion that the design of his death shall remain unaccomplished.

But again, we have before us the fact, that *hitherto all the works of God have accomplished their purpose.* Whenever God has uttered, by the lips of his servants, a prophecy, it has surely come to pass. The instruments of accomplishing that purpose have often been the most factious and rebellious of men: they had no intention whatever of serving God; they have run contrary to his laws; but you will observe that when they have dashed wildly along, his bit has been still in their mouth and his bridle in their jaws. A great monarch has acted like a leviathan in the sea; he hath moved himself wherever he pleased; he hath seemed mighty among the sons of men; all the rest of mankind were as minnows, while he was a huge leviathan: but we discover that God has been overruling his thought, that he has been in his council chamber, that the wildest speculations of his ambition have, after all, been but the fulfilling of Jehovah's stern decrees. Look ye abroad through all the nations of the earth and tell me is there one prophecy of God that hath failed? May he not still say, "Not one of them hath lost her mate?" Every word of God hath certainly been accomplished. The kings of the earth stood up and took counsel together against the Lord

and against his anointed, saying, "Let us break his bands asunder and cast his cords from us." But he that sitteth in the heavens did laugh at them; the Lord did have them in derision. Still he worked his own sovereign will; let them do as they pleased, God was over them all, reigning and ruling evermore. If, then, God's purpose in providence certainly never has been frustrated, am I to imagine that God's purpose in the glorious sacrifice of Jesus Christ shall be null and void? If there be any of you who have arrived at such a contortion of intellect as to conceive that a less work being accomplished, a greater one shall fail, I must leave you to yourselves; with you I could not argue; I should think you incapable of an argument. Surely, if God the Master, the Judge, the King, hath in all things done according to his own pleasure in this lower world, in the mere creation and preservation of men, it is not to be dreamed of for a moment, that when he stoops himself from the highest heaven, to give his own heart's blood for our redemption, he shall in that be foiled. No; though earth and hell be against him, every purpose of Jesus on the cross shall be consummated, and as the price was "finished," so shall the purchase be; as the means were fully provided, so shall the end be accomplished to its utmost jot and tittle.

But again, I invite you to stand at *the foot of the cross*, and take a view of Jesus Christ, and then I will put it to you whether you can imagine that Jesus Christ could in any measure have died in vain. Come, believer, place thyself in the garden of Gethsemane; hide thyself among those dark olives, and listen to yonder man who is in agony. Dost hear those groans? They are the groans of an incarnate God. Dost hear those sighs? They are the sighs of the Son of Man. God over all, blessed for ever. Hearest thou those strong cries, and dost thou see those tears? They are the crying and the tears of him who is equal with his Father, but who condescended to be a man. Rise, for he has risen; Judas has betrayed him and taken him away. Look on that ground. Seest thou those gouts of gore? It is the bloody sweat of the man Christ Jesus. I conjure thee, answer this question. Standing in the garden of Gethsemane, with those blood gouts staining the white frost of that cold midnight, canst thou believe that one of those clots of blood shall fall to the

ground and not effect its purpose? I challenge thee, O Christian, whatever thy doctrinal opinions, to say me "Yes" to such a question as that. Canst thou imagine that a sweat of blood from the veins of incarnate Deity shall ever fall to the ground and fail? Why, beloved, the *word* of God which cometh forth out of his mouth shall not return unto him void, but it shall accomplish that which he pleases; how much more shall the Great Word of God, which came forth from the loins of Deity, accomplish the purpose whereunto God hath sent him, and prosper in the thing for which it pleased God to ordain him!

But now come with me to *the hall of judgment.* See there your Master placed in mock state in the midst of a ribald band of soldiery. Do you see how they spit on those blessed cheeks, how they pluck his hair, how they buffet him? Do you see the crown of thorns with its ruby drops of gore? Hark! Can you hear the cry of the multitude, as they say, "Crucify him, crucify him?" And will you now stand there and look at this man whom Pilate has just brought forth, still bleeding from the lash of the scourge, covered with shame, and spitting and mockery; and as this "*Ecce Homo*" is presented to you, will you believe that this, the incarnate Son of God, shall be made such a spectacle to men, to angels, and to devils, and yet fail of his design? Can you imagine that one lash of that whip shall have a fruitless aim? Shall Jesus Christ suffer this shame and spitting, and yet endure what were far worse—a disappointment in the fulfilment of his intentions? No; God forbid! By Gethsemane and Gabbatha, we are pledged to the strong belief that what Christ designed by his death must certainly be accomplished.

Then again, see him *hanging on his cross.* The nails have pierced his hands and feet, and there in the broiling sun he hangs,—he hangs to die. The mockery has not ceased; still they put out the tongue and wag the head at him; still they taunt him with "If thou be the Son of God come down from the cross." And now his bodily pains increase, while his soul's anguish is terrible, even unto death. Christian, canst thou believe that the blood of Christ was shed in vain? Canst thou look at one of those precious drops as it trickles from his head or his hands, or his feet, and canst thou imagine that it shall fall to the ground

and perish there? True, the waters may fail from the sea, the sun may grow dim with age, but I never can imagine that the value, the merit, the power of the blood of Jesus ever shall die out, or that its purpose shall be unaccomplished. It seems to me as clear as noonday, that the design of the Saviour's death must certainly be fulfilled, be it what it may.

I might use a hundred other arguments. I might show that every attribute of Christ declares that his purpose must be accomplished. He certainly has love enough to accomplish his design of saving the lost; for he has a love that is bottomless and fathomless, even as the abyss itself. He certainly has no objection to the accomplishment of his own design, for "As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, but had rather that he should turn unto me and live." And certainly the Lord cannot fail for want of power, for where we have omnipotence there can be no deficiency of strength. Nor again, can the design be unaccomplished because it was unwise, for God's designs cannot be unwise, simply because they are of God—that is to say—they are of infinite wisdom. I cannot see any thing in the character of Christ, nor any thing the wide world over, that can for one moment make me imagine that Christ should die, and yet it should be said afterwards, "This man died for a purpose which he never lived to see accomplished; the object of his death was only partially fulfilled; he saw of the travail of his soul, but he was not satisfied, for he did not redeem all whom he intended to redeem."

Now, some persons love the doctrine of universal atonement because they say it is so beautiful. It is a lovely idea that Christ should have died for all men; it commends itself, they say, to the instincts of humanity; there is something in it full of joy and beauty. I admit there is; but beauty may be often associated with falsehood. There is much which I might well admire in the theory of universal redemption, but let me just tell you what the supposition necessarily involves. If Christ on his cross intended to save every man, then he intended to save those who were damned before he died; because, if the doctrine be true, that he died for all men, he died for some that were in hell before he came into this world, for doubtless there were myriads there that

had been cast away. Once again; if it were Christ's intention to save all men, how deplorably has he been disappointed! for we have his own evidence that there is a lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, and into that pit must be cast some of the very persons, who, according to that theory, were bought with his blood. That seems to me a thousand times more frightful than any of those horrors which are said to be associated with the Calvinistic and Christian doctrine of particular redemption. To think that my Saviour died for men in hell, seems a supposition too horrible for me to imagine; that he was the substitute for the sons of men, and that God having first punished the substitute, punished men again, seems to me to conflict with any idea of justice. That Christ should offer an atonement and satisfaction for the sins of men, and that afterwards those very men should be punished for the sins which Christ had already atoned for, seems to me, to be the most marvellous monstrosity that ever could have been imputed to Saturn, to Janus, ay, to the God of the Thugs, or the most diabolical heathen demons. God forbid, that we should ever think thus of Jehovah, the just and wise. If Christ has suffered in man's stead, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and save us from all unrighteousness.

II. I have thus started the first thought that the intention of Christ's death cannot be frustrated. And now methinks every one will anxiously listen, and every ear will be attentive, and the question will arise from every heart, "WHAT THEN WAS THE INTENTION OF THE SAVIOUR'S DEATH? AND IS IT POSSIBLE THAT I CAN HAVE A PORTION IN IT?" For whom, then, did the Saviour die—and is there the slightest possibility that I have some lot or portion in that great atonement which he has offered? Beloved, my text is the answer to the question—"The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Now, our text tells us of two things—first, the subjects of the Saviour's atonement, the lost; and, secondly, the objects of it he came to seek and save.

I must now endeavor to pick out the objects of the Saviour's atonement. He came "to seek and to save that which was *lost*." Some of you may turn your heads away at once, and conclude that hitherto you have given no evidence that you have any por

tion in the death of Christ. You are very good sort of people; you never did much that was wrong—perhaps a little now and then; but nothing particular ever troubles your conscience. You have a notion that you shall certainly enter into the kingdom of heaven, for you are no worse than your neighbors, and if you are not saved, God help other people! for if you do not go to heaven, who will? You are trusting in your own good works, and believing you are righteous. Now let us decide your case at once. Since you are ashamed to put yourselves among those who are lost, I have no Christ to preach to you till you are ready to come and confess that you are lost; for Christ himself tells us, that he came "not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance;" and inasmuch as you belong to the righteous, and trust in yourselves that you are good and excellent, you may turn upon your heel and go, for in the blood of Christ there is no portion for men who live and die trusting in their own self-righteousness.

But I may dismiss another part of you. Some of you are saying, "Well, sir, I know I am guilty, but still I am persuaded that by attention to the law of God in future, I shall certainly be able to take away the demerit of my guilt. I intend henceforward to reform, and I believe that by a consistent course of attention to religious ordinances, and by carefully regarding that which is right and wrong between God and man, and man and man, I shall, without doubt, make an atonement for the sins of the past." Ah, my friend, hitherto thou givest me no hope that thou had any portion in the death of Christ. Christ came not to die for men who can save themselves without him. If thou thinkest thou canst save thyself, remember the door of mercy is shut in thy face. Christ came to bring robes from heaven, but not for you who can spin for yourselves. He came to bring bread for the hungry, but he will give none of it to you who can sow and reap, and make bread for yourselves. Christ helps the helpless, but they who can help themselves and have sufficient of their own strength and merit to carry them to heaven, may fight their way there alone, if they can—they shall have no help from him. Whom then did Christ die to save? It is said, he came to save "that which was lost."

Now, you must bear with me while I run over the different ways in which a man may be lost; and then I will conclude by noticing the term as it is used in the proper sense, when we may affirm that Christ died for such. We know that all men are lost in Adam; as soon as we are born into this world, we are lost; when the tiny bark of the infant is launched upon the river of life it is lost; unless Sovereign grace shall stretch forth its hand and save it in infancy, and carry it to heaven, or save it afterwards, when it shall have grown up—that infant is lost. "Behold," saith David, "I was born in sin and shapen in iniquity; in sin did my mother conceive me." "In Adam all die." The fall of Adam was the fall of the human race; then, you and I, and all of us, fell down.

Again, we are all lost by practice. No sooner does the child become capable of knowing right and wrong, than you discover that he chooses the evil and abhors the good. Early passions soon break out, like weeds immediately after the shower of rain, speedily the hidden depravity of the heart makes itself manifest, and we grow up to sin, and so we become lost by practice. But mark, a man may be lost in Adam, and lost by practice, and yet not be saved by Christ; but Christ is able to save you; though you be twice lost, his salvation is able to redeem you from death.

Then there be some who go further still. The deadly tree of sin grows taller and taller; some become lost to the church. After having been trained up religiously in our midst, they turn aside, they give up all outward regard to the worship of God, the ministry of the gospel is neglected, the house of prayer is forsaken, and the church tolls its bell and says of such an one, "He is lost to the church." Some go further still; they are lost to society. I have seen many who are dead while they live. We have in the midst of us the harlot and the drunkard, who, like the leper in the camp of Israel, have to be put away lest the vil should spread; and those who seek after right are obliged to urn away from them, lest the evil should spread in the midst of the flock. Now there are many who are lost to society whom Jesus Christ came to save, and whom he will save. But a man may be lost to society, and may be lost everlastingly; it is no proof that Christ will save him, because he is thus lost, while at

the same time it is no proof that he will not save him, for Christ came to save even men who are lost like this. Again, the man may go further, and be lost to the family. We have known those who have become so vile, that even after society has shut them out, a parent has been obliged to shut them out too. That must be a hell of sin indeed which can make a father say to his son, "My son, you shall not want bread while I have any, but I must forbid you my house, for your brothers and sisters can not endure your society; I feel you would destroy their souls if I should allow you to associate with them." Now, a man may be lost thus to his own family, and yet sovereign grace will save him. But, mark, a man may be lost to his family and yet not be saved; yea, that may be the increase of his condemnation, that he sinned against a mother's prayers and against a father's exhortations.

Now I will tell you the people whom Christ will save—they are those who are *lost to themselves.* Just imagine a ship at sea passing through a storm: the ship leaks, and the captain tells the passengers he fears they are lost. If they are far away from shore, and have sprung a leak, they pump with all their might as long as they have any strength remaining; they seek to keep down the devouring element; they still think that they are not quite lost while they have the power to use the pumps. At last they see the ship cannot be saved; they give it up for lost, and leap into the boats. The boats are floating for many a day, full of men who have but little food to eat. "They are lost," we say, "lost out at sea." But they do not think so; they still cherish a hope that perhaps some stray ship may pass that way and pick them up. There is a ship in the horizon; they strain their eyes to look at her; they lift each other up; they wave a flag; they rend their garments to make something which shall attract attention; but she passes away; black night comes, and they are forgotten. At length the very last mouthful of food has been consumed; strength fails them, and they lay down their oars in the boat, and lay themselves down to die. You can imagine then how well they understand the awful meaning of the term—"lost." As long as they had any strength left they felt they were not lost; as long as they could see a sail they felt

there was yet hope; while there was yet a mouldy biscuit left, or a drop of water, they did not give up all for lost. Now the biscuit is gone, and the water is gone; now strength is departed, and the oar lies still: they lie down to die by each other's side, mere skeletons; things that should have been dead days ago, if they had died when all enjoyment of life had ceased. Now they know, I say, what it is to be lost, and across the shoreless waters they seem to hear their death-knell pealing forth that awful word, Lost! lost! lost! Now, in a spiritual sense, these are the people Christ came to save. Sinner, thou too art condemned. Our Father Adam steered the ship awry and she split upon a rock, and she is filling even to her bulwarks now; and pump as philosophy may, it can never keep the waters of her depravity so low as to prevent the ship from sinking. Seeing that human nature is of itself lost, it hath taken to the boat. She is a fair boat, called the boat of Good Endeavor, and in her you are striving to row with all your might, to reach the shore; but your strength fails you. You say, "Oh, I cannot keep God's law. The more I strive to keep it, the more I find it to be impossible for me to do so. I climb; but the higher I climb the higher is the top above me. When I was in the plains, I thought the mountain was but a moderate hill; but now I seem to have ascended half-way up its steps,—there it is, higher than the clouds, and I cannot discern the summit." However, you gather up your strength, you try again, you row once more, and at last unable to do any thing, you lay down your oars, feeling that if you are saved, it cannot be by your own works. Still you have a little hope left. There are a few small pieces of mouldy biscuit remaining. You have heard that by attention to certain ceremonies you may be saved, and you munch your dry biscuit; but at last that fails you, and you find that neither baptism, nor the Lord's supper, nor any other outward rites, can make you clean, for the leprosy lies deep within. That done, you still look out. You are in hopes that there may be a sail coming, and while floating upon that deep of despair, you think you detect in the distance some new dogma, some fresh doctrine that may comfort you. It passes, however, like the wild phantom ship—it is gone, and there you are left at last, with the burning sky of God's vengeance

above you, with the deep waters of a bottomless hell beneath you, fire in your heart and emptiness in that ship which once was so full of hope, you lie down despairing, and you cry,—"Lord save me, or I perish!" Is that your condition this morning, my friend, or *has* that *ever* been your condition? If so, Christ came into the world to seek and to save you; and you he will save, and no one else. He will save only those who can claim this for their title,—"Lost;" who have understood in their own souls what it is to be lost, as to all self-trust, all self-reliance, and all self-hope. I can look back to the time when I knew myself to be lost. I thought that God meant to destroy me. I imagined that because I felt myself to be lost, I was the special victim of Almighty vengeance; for I said unto the Lord, "Hast thou set me as the target of all thine arrows? Am I a sea or a whale, that thou hast set a mark upon me? Hast thou sewed up mine iniquties in a bag, and sealed my transgressions with a seal. Wilt thou never be gracious? Hast thou made me to be the centre of all sorrow, the chosen one of heaven to be cursed for ever?" Ah! fool that I was! I little knew then, that those who have the curse in themselves are the men whom God will bless —that we have the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in him who died for us and rose again. Come, I will put the question once again—can you say that you are lost? Was there a time when you travelled with the caravan through this wild wilderness world? Have you left the caravan with your companions, and are you left in the midst of a sea of sand—a hopeless, arid waste? And do you look around you, and see no helper; and do you cast your eyes around and see no trust? Is the death-bird wheeling in the sky, screaming with delight because he hopes soon to feed upon your flesh and bones? Is the water-bottle dry, and doth the bread fail you? Have you consumed the last of your dry dates, and drunk the last of that brackish water from the bottle; and are you now without hope, without trust in yourself; ready to lie down in despair? Hark thee! The Lord thy God loveth thee; Jesus Christ has bought thee with his blood; thou art, thou shalt be his. He has been seeking thee all this time, and he has found thee at last, in the vast howling wilderness, and now he will take thee

upon his shoulders, and carry thee to his house rejoicing, and the angels shall be glad over thy salvation. Now, such people must and shall be saved; and this is the description of those whom Jesus Christ came to save. Whom he came to save he will save; you, ye lost ones—lost to all hope and self confidence, shall be saved. Though death and hell should stand in the way, Christ will perform his vow, and accomplish his design.

I shall be very brief in concluding my discourse; but we have now to notice THE OBJECTS OF THE DEATH OF CHRIST—he came "to *seek* and to *save* that which was lost." I am so glad that these two words are both there, for if they were not, what hope would there be for any of us? The Arminian says Christ came to save those that seek him. Beloved, there is a sense in which that is true; but it is a lie. Christ did come to save those that seek him, but no one ever sought the Lord Jesus Christ, unless the Lord Jesus Christ first sought them. Christ does not leave it to our selves to seek him, or else it would be left indeed, for so vile is human nature that although heaven be offered, and though hell thunder in our ears, yet there never was, and there never will be, any man who, unconstrained by sovereign grace, will run in the way of salvation, and so escape from hell and flee to heaven. It is all in vain for me to preach to you, and all in vain for the most earnest exhortations to be addressed to any of you, unless the Holy Spirit shall be pleased to back them up; for man is so infatuated, his disease is one which causes such a madness of the brain, that he refuses the remedy, and puts away from him the healing draught which alone can give him life from the dead. "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life." Let man alone, and with the cross of Christ before him and all hell behind him, he will shut his eyes and prefer to be damned rather than enter into eternal life by the blood of Christ the Lord. Hence Christ came first to seek men, and then to save them. Ah! what a task that is of seeking men! There are some of you to-day on the tops of the mountains of pride, and others of you in the deep glens of despair. Methinks I see the Saviour coming forth to seek you; he finds you to-day in the green pastures of the sanctuary, he comes near to you, and by these hands of mine he seeks to lay hold of you, but no sooner do you discern his

approach then you run far away into the wild desert of sin. Perhaps this evening you will be spending the remnant of the Sabbath in profaning God's day. One of you, at least, I know who will be in the public house as soon as the evening sermon is over, and most probably will go home very late. If Christ intends to save you he will go to you there; and while you are in that wild waste of sin, he will send some providence after you and save you there. Away you fly then to the marshes of reformation, and you say, "The shepherd cannot overtake me. I shall be beyond his reach now, I have left off my drunkenness, I have given up my cursing." But he will come to you there, and wade for you ankle deep in your own self-righteousness. And then you will run away again and jump into the deep pit of despair, and there you will say to yourself, "He can never find me here." But I see him coming with that crook of his: he enters the pit, takes you by the feet, and casts you round his neck and carries you home rejoicing, saying, "I have found him, at last! Wherever he wandered, I sought him, and now I have found him." It is strange what queer places Christ finds some of his people in! I knew one of Christ's sheep who was found out by his Master while committing robbery. I knew another who was found out by Christ, while he was spiting his old mother by reading the Sunday newspaper and making fun of her. Many have been found by Jesus Christ, even in the midst of sin and vanity. I knew a preacher of the Gospel who was converted in a theatre. He was listening to a play, an old-fashioned piece, that ended with a sailor's drinking a glass of gin before he was hung, and he said, "Here's to the prosperty of the British nation, and the salvation of my immortal soul;" and down went the curtain; and down went my friend too, for he ran home with all his might. Those words, "The salvation of my immortal soul, had struck him to the quick; and he sought the Lord Jesus in his chamber. Many a day he sought him, and at last he found him, to his joy and confidence.

But for the most part Christ finds his people in his own house; but he finds them often in the worst of tempers, in the most hardened conditions; and he softens their hearts, awakens their consciences, subdues their pride, and takes them to himself; but

never would they come to him unless he came to them. Sheep go astray, but they do not come back again of themselves. Ask the shepherd whether his sheep come back, and he will tell you, "No, sir; they will wander, but they never return." When you find a sheep that ever came back of himself, then you may hope to find a sinner that will come to Christ of himself. No; it must be sovereign grace that must seek the sinner and bring him home.

And when Christ seeks him he SAVES him. Having caugh him at last, like the ram of old, in the thorns of conviction, he does not take a knife and slay him, as the sinner expects, but he takes him by the hand of mercy, and begins to comfort and to save. Oh, ye lost sinners, the Christ who seeks you to-day in the ministry, and who has sought you many a day by his providence, will save you. He will first find you when you are emptied of self, and then he will save you. When you are stripped he will bring forth the best robe and put it on you. When you are dying, he will breathe life into your nostrils. When you feel yourselves condemned he will come and blot out your iniquities like a cloud, and your transgressions like a thick cloud. Fear not, ye hopeless and helpless souls, Christ seeks you to-day, and seeking, he will save you—save you here, save you living, save you dying, save you in time, save you in eternity, and give you, even you, the lost ones, a portion among them that are sanctified. May the Lord now bless these words to your consolation!

III. I shall not stop to say more, as I intended to have done, lest I should weary you. Let me only remind you, that the time is coming when that word "lost" will have a more frightful meaning to you than it has to-day. In a few more months, some of you, my hearers, will hear the great bell of eternity tolling forth that awful word—lost, lost, lost! The great sepulchres of hell will toll out your doom—lost, lost, lost! and through the shades of eternal misery this shall for ever assail your ear, that you are lost for ever. But if that bell is ringing in your ear to-day, that you are lost, oh, be of good cheer; it is a good thing to be so lost; it is a happy thing to be lost to self, and lost to pride, and lost to carnal hope. Christ will save you. Believe

that. Look to him as he hangs upon his cross. One look shall give you comfort. Turn your weeping eyes to him as he bleeds there in misery. He can, he will save you. Believe on him, for he that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved. He that believeth not must be damned; but whosoever among the lost ones will now cast himself on Christ Jesus, shall find everlasting life through his death and righteousness. May the Lord now gather in his lost sheep, for Jesus Christ's sake! **Amen.**

SERMON VII.

AN EARNEST INVITATION.

"Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him."—PSALM ii. 12.

IT will not be needful for me this morning to be controversial in my discourse; for but two Sabbaths ago I addressed you from that text, "The mighty God," and endeavored with the utmost of my ability to prove that Christ must be "very God of very God,"—co-equal and co-eternal with his Father. Without, then, attempting to prove that, let us drive onward towards the practical issue; for, after all, practice is the end of preaching; or, if ye will have it, I will put it into Herbert's words—

> "Attend sermons, but prayers most,
> Praying's the end of preaching."

And that too is in the text, for what lip can give the kiss of sincerity to the Son of God, save the lip of prayer. We drive onward, then, towards the practical conclusion. May God the Holy Spirit assist us.

Now it has sometimes been disputed among most earnest and zealous ministers, which is the most likely means of bringing souls to Christ; whether it is the thunder of the threatening, or the still small whisper of the promise. I have heard some ministers who preferred the first; they have constantly dwelt upon the terrors of the law; and they have certainly, many of them, been eminently useful; they have had Scripture for their warrant—"Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." With "terrible things in righteousness" declaring the just

anger and judgment of God against sin, they have alarmed those who were sitting at ease in a graceless state, and have thus been the means in the hands of God, of inducing them to flee from the wrath to come. Some, on the other hand, have rather decried the threatenings; and have dwelt almost entirely upon the promises. Like John, their ministry has been full of love; they have constantly preached from such texts as this—"Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,"—and such like. Now, these also have been eminently useful; and they too have had Scriptural warrant in abundance, for thus spake Christ's apostles full often, and thus spake Jesus Christ himself, wooing with notes of mercy, and melting with tones of love those whom the law's terrors would but have hardened in their sins. My text, however, seems to be a happy combination of the two, and I take it, that the most successful ministry will combine both means of bringing men to Christ. The text thunders with all the bolts of God—"Lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little." But it does not end in thunder; there comes a sweet, soft, reviving shower after the storm; "Blessed are all they that put their trust in him."

This morning I shall endeavor to use both arguments, and shall divide my text thus:—First, *the command*, "Kiss the Son;" secondly, *the argument used*, "lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way;" and thirdly, *the benediction with which the text closes*—"Blessed are all they that put their trust in him;" this benediction being a second reason why we should obey the commandment.

I. First, then, THE COMMAND—"Kiss the Son." This bears our interpretations. A kiss has divers meanings in it—progressive meanings. I pray that we may be led by grace from step to step, so that we may understand the command in all its fulness, by putting it in practice.

1. In the first place, it is a kiss of *reconciliation*. The kiss is a token of enmity removed, of strife ended, and of peace established. You will remember that when Jacob met Esau, although

the hearts of the brothers had been long estranged, and fear had dwelt in the breast of one, and revenge had kindled its fires in the heart of the other; when they met they were pacified towards each other, and they fell upon each other's neck, and they kissed; it was the kiss of reconciliation. Now, the very first work of grace in the heart is, for Christ to give the sinner the kiss of his affection, to prove his reconciliation to the sinner. Thus the father kissed his prodigal son when he returned. Before the feast was spread, before the music and the dance began, the father fell upon his son's neck, and kissed him. On our part, however, it is our business to return that kiss; and as Jesus gives the reconciling kiss on God's behalf, it is ours to kiss the lip of Jesus, and to prove by that deed that we are "reconciled to God by the death of his Son." Sinner, thou hast hitherto been an enemy of Christ's gospel. Thou hast hated his Sabbaths; thou hast neglected his Word; thou hast abhorred his commandments and cast his laws behind thy back; thou hast, as much as lieth in thee, opposed his kingdom; thou hast loved the wages of sin, and the ways of iniquity better than the ways of Christ. What sayest thou? Does the Spirit now strive in thy heart? Then, I beseech thee, yield to his gracious influence, and now let thy quarrel be at an end. Cast down the weapons of thy rebellion; pull out the plumes of pride from thy helmet, and cast away the sword of thy rebellion. Be his enemy no longer; for, rest assured, he wills to be thy friend. With arms outstretched, ready to receive thee, with eyes full of tears, weeping over thine obstinacy, and with bowels moved with compassion for thee, he speaks through my lips this morning, and he says, "Kiss the Son;" be reconciled. This is the very message of the gospel—"The ministry of reconciliation." Thus speak we, as God hath command us. "We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." And is this a hard thing we ask of you, that you should be at friendship with him who is your best friend? Is this a rigorous law, like the commands of Pharoah to the children of Israel in Egypt, when he bids you simply strike hands with him who shed his blood for sinners? We ask you not to be friends of death or hell; we beg you rather to dissolve your league with them; we pray that grace may lead you to forswear their com-

pany for ever, and be at peace with him who is incarnate love and infinite mercy. Sinners, why will ye resist him who only longs to save you? Why scorn him who loves you? Why trample on the blood that bought you, and reject the cross which is the only hope of your salvation? "Kiss the Son."

> "Bow the knee, and kiss the Son,
> Come and welcome, sinner, come."

That is the first meaning of the text—the kiss of reconciliation. The Spirit of God must work a change in man's heart before he will be willing to give this kiss, and it is my heart's desire, that by the words which shall be uttered this morning, the Spirit may bow the obdurate heart, and lead you to give Christ the kiss of reconciliation this very day.

2. Again, the kiss of my text is a kiss of *allegiance and homage.* It is an Eastern custom for the subjects to kiss the feet of the king; nay, in some instances their homage is so abject that they kiss the dust beneath his feet, and the very steps of his throne. Now, Christ requires of every man who would be saved, that he shall yield to his government and his rule. There are some who are willing enough to be saved and take Christ to be their priest, but they are not willing to give up their sins, not willing to obey his precepts, to walk in his ordinances, and keep his command ments. Now, salvation cannot be cut in twain. If you would have justification you must have sanctification too. If your sins are pardoned they must be abhorred; if ye are washed in the blood to take away the guilt of sin, you must be washed in the water to take away the power of sin over your affections and life. Oh, sinners, the command is, "Kiss the Son," bow your knee, and come and own him to be a monarch, and say, "Other lords have had dominion over us; we have worshipped our lusts, our pleasures, our pride, our selfishness, but now will we submit ourselves to thine easy yoke. Take us and make us thine, for we are willing to be thy subjects—

> 'Oh, sovereign grace our hearts subdue,
> We would be led in triumph too,
> As willing captives to our Lord,
> To sing the triumphs of his Word.'"

You must give him the kiss of fealty, of homage, and loyalty, and take him to be your king. And is this a hard thing? Is this a rigorous commandment? Why look at Englishmen, how they spring to their feet, and sing with enthusiasm—

"God save our gracious Queen,
Long live our noble Queen,
God save the Queen!"

And is it a hard thing for you and me to be bidden to cry, "God save King Jesus! Spread his kingdom! Let him reign, King of kings and Lord of lords! Let him reign in our hearts?" Is it a hard thing to bow before his gentle sceptre? Is there any cruelty in the demand, that we should submit ourselves to the law of right, and rectitude, and justice, and love? "His ways are ways of pleasantness, and all his paths are peace." "His commandments are not grievous." "Come unto me," saith the Lord, "and I will give you rest; take my yoke upon you;" it is not heavy; "take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." O sinner, leave that black monarch; turn your back upon the king of hell. May grace enable you now to flee away from him who deludes you to-day, and shall destroy you for ever; and come ye to the Prince Immanuel, the Son of God, and now declare yourselves to be the willing subjects of his blessed kingdom. "Kiss the Son." It is the kiss of reconciliation and the kiss of homage.

3. Again, it is the kiss of *worship*. They that worshipped Baal kissed the calves. It was the custom in the east for idolaters to kiss the god which they foolishly adored. Now the commandment is that we should give to Christ divine worship. The Unitarian will not do this: he says, "Christ is but a mere man;" he will not kiss the eternal Son of God. Then let him know that God will not alter his gospel to suit his heresy. If he rebelliously denies the Godhead of Christ, he need not marvel if in the last day Christ shall say—"But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me." It is no marvel if he who rejects the Godhead of Christ, should find that he has built his house upon

the sand, and when the rain descends, and the flood comes, his hope shall totter, and great shall be the fall thereof. We are bidden to worship Christ, and O how pleasant is this command, to kiss him in adoration! It is the highest joy of the Christian to worship Jesus. I know of no thrill of pleasure that can more rejoice the Christian's breast, and thrill his soul to music, than the song of—

> "Worthy is he that once was slain,
> The Prince of Peace that groan'd and died,
> Worthy to rise, and live, and reign
> At his Almighty Father's side."

Surely that shall be the very song of heaven, to sing "Worthy the Lamb," and yet again to shout louder still, "Worthy the Lamb! worthy the Lamb!" Well, sinner, thou art bidden to do this—to acknowledge Christ thy God. "Kiss the Son;" go to him in prayer this very day; cast thyself on thy knees and worship him; confess thy sin committed against him; lay hold of his righteousness; touch the hem of his garment; adore him by thy faith, trusting in him; adore him by thy service, living for him; adore him with thy lip, praising him; adore him with thy heart, loving him, and surrendering thy whole being to him. God help thee in this way to "kiss the Son."

4. There is yet a fourth meaning, and I think this is the sweetest of all. "Kiss the Son." Ah, Mary Magdalene, I need thee this morning! Come hither, Mary, thou shalt explain my text. There was a woman who had much forgiven and she loved much, and as a consequence, loving much she desired much the company and the presence of the object of her affection. She came to the Pharisee's house where he was feasting, but she was afraid to enter, for she was a sinner; the Pharisee would repulse her and tell her to go away. What did a harlot there, in the house of a holy Pharisee? So she came to the door, as if she would peep in and just get a glimpse of him whom her soul loved. But there he lay upon the table, and happily for her, the Pharisee had slighted Christ, he had not put him at the head of the table, but at the end, and therefore his feet—lying backward as he reclined—were close against the door. She came, and oh! she

could not dare to look upon his head; she stood at his feet, behind him, weeping. And as she wept, the tears flowed so plenteously that she washed his feet—which the Pharisee had forgotten to wash—with her tears. And then unbraiding her luxurious tresses, which had been the nets into which she had entangled her lovers, she began to wipe his feet with the hairs of her head, and stooping down she kissed his feet, and kissed them yet again. Poor sinner, thou that art full of guilt, if thou has played the harlot, or if thou hast been a sinner in other ways, come, I beseech thee, to Jesus now. Look to him, believe in him,

> "Trust in his blood, for it alone
> Hath power sufficient to atone."

And this done, come thou and "kiss the Son"—kiss his feet with love. Oh, if he were here this morning, methinks I would kiss those feet again and again. And if any should enquire the reason, I would answer,

> "Love I much? I've much forgiven,
> I'm a miracle of grace."

Jesus, dost thou permit me to kiss thy feet with the kisses of affection? And may I pray like the spouse in the Canticles: "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, for thy love is better than wine." May I so pray? Then, glory be to thy name, I will not be slow in praying it. If I may be so highly favored, I will not lose the favor through negligence and coldness of heart. Even now my soul gives the kiss of deep and sincere affection.

> "Yes, I love thee and adore,
> O for grace to love thee more."

"Kiss the Son." Do you see then the meaning of it? It is a kiss of reconciliation, a kiss of homage, a kiss of worship, and a kiss of affectionate gratitude. "Kiss the Son."

And what if in this great assembly there should be some soul that saith, "I will not kiss the Son, I owe him nothing, I will not serve him, I will not be reconciled to him?" Ah! soul, there are tears for thee. Would God that all the people of Christ would weep for thee until thy heart were changed; for the terrible

part of the text which we are to read belongs to thee, and ere long thou shalt know its fearful meaning. But may we not hope better things? Have we not somewhere in this great hall some poor trembling penitent, who with the tear in his eye is saying, "Kiss him and be reconciled to him!—Oh that I might! My fear is, sir, if I should try to draw near to Christ, he would say, Get thee gone, I will have nought to do with thee; thou art too vile, too hardened; thou hast too long resisted the Word, too long despised my grace—get thee gone.'" No, soul, Jesus never said that yet, and he never will. Whatever are thy sins as long as thou art in the body there is hope. However great thy guilt, however enormous thy transgressions, if thou art now willing to be reconciled, God has made thee willing, and he would not have put the will if he did not intend to gratify it. There is nothing that can keep thee from Christ if thou art willing to come. Christ casts out none that desire to be saved. There is in his heart enough for all that seek him, enough for each, enough for evermore. Oh! think not that Christ is ever slower than we are. We never love him before he loves us. If our heart loves him, his soul loved us long ago, and if we are now willing to be reconciled to him, let us rest assured that Jehovah's melting bowels yearn to clasp his Ephraims to his breast. May God bless this exhortation to every heart now present, and to him be the glory.

II. This brings us to the second part of the text. "Kiss the Son"—and THE ARGUMENT is, "Lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little;" read it—"Lest he be angry." And can *he* be angry? Is he not the Lamb of God? Can a lamb be angry? Did not he weep over sinners? Can *he* be angry? Did not he die for sinners?—can *he* be angry. Yes, and when he is angry, it is anger indeed. When he is angry it is anger that none can match. The most awful word I sometimes think in the whole Bible is that shriek of the lost. "Rocks, hide us! mountains, fall upon us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb." What a fearful conjunction of terms—"the wrath of the Lamb?" Can you picture that dear face of his, those eyes that wept, those hands that bled, those lips that

spoke such notes of love, such words of pity, and can you believe that one day those eyes shall know no tears, but shall flash with lightning; that those hands shall know no mercy, but shall grasp a rod of iron and break the wicked into pieces like potter's vessels; and those feet shall know no errands of love, but he shall tread upon his enemies, and crush them, even as grapes are trodden by the wine-pressers, and the blood thereof shall stain his garments, and as he comes up from their destruction, they shall ask him, "Who is this that cometh?"—not from Calvary, not from Gethsemane, but "Who is this that cometh from Edom"—the land of his enemies—"with dyed garments from Bozrah?"—the land of his stoutest foes—"this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength?" And what shall be the answer? It is most terrible. Who is this that has trodden his enemies and crushed them?—"I that speak in righteousness, *mighty to save.*" Why, Jesus, if thou hadst said, "Mighty to destroy," we might have understood thee; but "mighty to save!"—and so he is—this gives the edge to the whole sentence, that when he shall destroy his enemies, he that is mighty to save will be mighty to crush, mighty to damn, mighty to devour, and rend his prey in pieces.

I know nothing, I repeat, more fearful than the thought that Christ will be angry, and that if we live and die finally impenitent, rejecting his mercy and despising his sacrifice, we have good need to tremble at this sentence, "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry." And now do you see again that if Christ once be angry, it must be all over with our hopes or our rest? We will suppose now some poor girl who has stepped aside from the paths of right. She has persevered in her iniquity despite many warnings. Friends rise up to help her, but they drop off one by one, for she becomes incorrigibly wicked. Others come to help her, but as often as they rise they fall again, for she sins, and sins, and sins again. There is, however, one who has oftentimes received her to his bosom, erring though she be—her father. He says, "Shall I forget the child I have begotten? Sinner she is, but she is still my child;" and often as she sins and goes away, he will not reject her; he receives her to his house again; tainted and defiled, again he gives her the kiss of fond affection. At last she

perseveres in her iniquity, and goes to such a length that one day, in her desperate despair, some one says to her, why not seek a friend to deliver you in this your awful hour of distress and anguish on account of sin? "Oh," says she, "I have none left." "But there is your father; have you not a father or a mother?" "Yes," says she, "but he is angry, and he will do nothing for me." Then her last door is shut, and her hope is over. What wonder that—

> "Mad from life's history,
> Glad to death's mystery,
> Swift to be hurled—
> Anywhere, anywhere,
> Out of the world,"

she ends her life because her only helper is angry, and her hope is gone? Despair must seize her then, when her best, her only helper is angry with her. Let me give you another picture,—a simpler one. There is a dove long gone out of Noah's ark: suppose that dove to have been flying many hours till its wing is weary. Poor, poor dove! Across the shoreless sea it flies, and finds never a spot whereon its weary feet may rest. At last, it bethinks itself of the ark; it flies there, hoping there to find a shelter; but suppose it should see Noah standing looking through the window with crossbow to destroy it,—then where were its hope? Its only hope hath proved the gate of death. Now let it fold its wings and sink into the black stream, and die with all the rest. Ah! sinner, these two are but faint pictures of the desperateness of your despair when once he is angry,—he who is the sinner's friend, the sinner's wooer, he of whom we sometimes say,—

> "Jesus, lover of my soul."

When he is angry, where, where, oh where can sinners hide? When he is angry, when he takes a bow and fits an arrow to the string, where is your shelter then?—where your defence and refuge? Sinners, "Kiss the Son," bow before him now, and receive his grace; acknowledge his sway, lest he be angry with you, and for ever shut you up in black despair, for none can give you hope or joy when once he is angry.

And now mark the effects of Christ's anger, "And ye perish

from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little." Let me give you a picture. Ye have seen the maid light the fire. At first it is the match, the spark, and there is a little kindling; a kindling but a little. What is that compared with the fire that is to succeed? Ye have heard of the prairie burning. The traveller hath lit his fire and dropped a spark—the fire is kindling but a little, and a small circle of flame is forming. Ye cannot judge what will be the mighty catastrophe when the sheet of flame shall seem to cover half the continent. And yet, mark you, our text says that "when God's wrath is kindled but a little" it is even then enough to utterly destroy the wicked, so that they "perish from the way." What a fearful thought it presents to us if we have but eyes to see it! It is like one of Martin's great pictures: it has more cloud in it than plain outline; it has in it great masses of blackness; there is only this little kindling, and there is the sinner destroyed. But what is that? Black, thick darkness for ever. What must become of the sinner then, when the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone shall blow up Tophet till its flames reach above all thought, and till the fire burns, beneath, even to the lowest hell? His wrath is kindled but a little then. I find, however, Calvin, together with several other excellent commentators, gives another interpretation to this:—"In but a little," and ye perish from the way when his wrath is kindled very soon, or, "in but a little time." So it may be well translated without any violence whatever to the original. God's anger kindles very speedily when once men have rejected him: when the period of their mercy is passed away, then comes the hour of their black despair, and his wrath is kindled in a little time. This should make each one of us think about our souls—the fact that God may take us away with a stroke, and a great ransom cannot deliver us. We had, last Sabbath-day, a terrible picture of how soon God can take away a man with a stroke. On our common, you will remember, at Clapham, a man sought shelter beneath a poplar tree, and in a moment a bolt fell from heaven and rent his body in pieces, and he died. I should not have marvelled if last night, when I was reading my text by the glare of the lightning, thinking it over amidst the roarings of the thunder, if many such deaths had oc

curred. God can soon take us away. But this is the wonder, that men will visit that tree by which their fellow died, and go away and be just as careless as they were before. You and I hear of sudden deaths, and yet we imagine *we* shall not die sud denly. We cannot think God's wrath will be kindled in a little time, and that he will take us away with a stroke. We get the idea that we shall die in our nests, with a slow and gradual death, and have abundance of time for preparation. Oh, I beseech you, let no such delusion destroy your soul. "Kiss the Son now, lest he be angry in a little while, and ye perish from the way." Now bow before him and receive his grace.

However, I return to the old reading of the text, "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little." How terrible is the doom of the wicked! The little kindling of God's wrath kills them; what shall the eternal burnings be? Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall abide with everlasting burnings? There is a land of thick darkness and despair where dwelleth the undying worm, which in its ceaseless folds doth crush the spirits of the damned. There is a fire quick burning, that drieth up the very marrow of body and soul, and yet destroyeth them not. There also is the pit that knoweth no bottom, the hopeless falling without a thought of ever coming to an end. There is a land where souls linger in eternal death, and yet they never die; crushed, but not annihilated; broken, but not destroyed; for ever, for ever, for ever, is the ceaseless wave which rolls its fresh tide of fire upon a shore of agony, whose years are as countless as the sands of the sea. And shall it be your lot and mine to dwell for ever with the howling spirits of the damned? Must these eyes weep the briny tear that cannot assuage thirst? Must these lips be parched with the infinite heat? Must this body be everlastingly tormented, and this soul, with all its powers, become a lake of grief into which torrents of Almighty wrath shall roll ceaselessly with black and fiery streams? Oh, my God, and can the thought be uttered—there may be some in this hall this morning, who, ere long, shall be in hell? If you should see an arrow fitted to a string pointed in yon direction, would you think it a hard prophecy if I should say, that ere long

the arrow would find its mark over yonder? "No," you would say, "it is but nature that it should go in the way in which it is directed." But, sinners, some of you are this day fitted on the bow of sin. Sin is the string that impels you forward. Nay, more than this. Some of you are whistling onward towards death, despair, and hell. Sin is the path to hell, and you are travelling in it with lightning speed. Why need you think me harsh if I prophecy that you will get to the end ere long, and reap the harvest to your soul? Oh, "kiss the Son," I beseech you; for if ye kiss him not, if ye receive not his grace and mercy, perish ye must; there is no hope for you; desperate without remedy, your end must be, if ye will not yield your pride and submit to Jesus. Oh! what language shall I use? Here were a task for Demosthenes, if he could rise from the dead, and be converted, and preach with all his mighty eloquence, and exhort you to flee from the wrath to come. Here is a text that might exhaust the eloquence of the apostle Paul, while with tears running down his cheeks, he would plead with you to flee to Christ, and lay hold upon his mercy. As for me, I cannot speak my soul out. Would that my heart could speak without my lips, to tell out the agony I feel just now concerning your souls. Oh, why will ye die? "Why will ye die, O house of Israel?" Will you make your beds in hell? Will you wrap yourselves about with flame forever? Will you have the merriment of sin in this life, and then reap the harvest of destruction in the world to come? Oh, men and brethren, I beseech you by the living God, by death, by eternity, by heaven, and by hell; I implore you, stop! stop! and "kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way." Oh! the terrors of the Lord! who shall speak them? Last night, we saw, as it were, the back parts of the terrible God, when his skirts of light swept through the sky. He made clouds his chariot, and he did ride upon the wings of the wind. Sinners, can ye stand before the God of thunder? Can ye war against the God of lightning? Will ye resist him, and despise his Son, and reject the offer of mercy, and dash yourselves upon his spear, and rush upon his sword? Oh, turn ye? turn ye now! Thus saith the Lord: "Consider your ways."

"Bow the knee and kiss the Son;
Come, and welcome, sinner, come!"

III. And now give me your attention just a moment or two longer while with all earnestness I endeavor to preach for a little while upon THE BENEDICTION WITH WHICH THE TEXT CLOSES: "Blessed are all they that put their trust in him." I have been beating the big drum of threatening, and now let us have the soft, sweet harp of David, of sweet, wooing benedictions. "Blessed are all they that put their trust in him." Dost thou put thy trust in him, my hearer? Beneath the wings of God we nestle, and we know of no security elsewhere. This is enough for us. Now the text says that those that trust in him are blessed; and I would observe, first, that they are *really* blessed. It is no fiction, no imaginary blessing; it is a real blessedness which belongs to those that trust in God; a blessedness that will stand the test of consideration, the test of life, and the trial of death; a blessedness into which we cannot plunge too deeply, for it is none of it a dream, but all a reality.

Again, those that trust in him have not only a real blessedness, but they oftentimes have a *conscious* blessedness. They know what it is to be blessed in their troubles, for they are in their trials comforted, and they are blessed in their joys, for their joys are sanctified. They are blest and they know it, they sing about it and they rejoice in it. It is their joy to know that God's blessing is come to them not in words only but in very deed. They are blessed men and blessed women.

"They would not change their blest estate
For all the world calls good and great."

Then, further, they are not only really blessed, and consciously blessed, but they are *increasingly* blessed. Their blessedness grows. They do not go down hill as the wicked do, from bright hope to black despair They do not diminish in their delights, the river deepens as they wade into it. They are blessed when the first ray of heavenly light streams on their eye-balls; they are blessed when their eyes are opened wider still, to see more of the love of Christ; they are blessed the more their experience

widens and their knowledge deepens, and their love increases. They are blessed in the hour of death, and, best of all, their blessedness increases to eternal blessedness,—the perfection of the saints at the right hand of God. "Blessed are all they that put their trust in him." Time fails me to enter into this blessed benediction, and therefore I pause and come back to my old work again of endeavoring to reach you by earnest entreaty, while I urge you to "kiss the Son."

Sinner, you are bidden to trust in Christ this morning. Come, this is your *only* hope. Remember, you may do a hundred things, but you will be none the better. You will be like the woman mentioned in Scripture, who spent all her money on physicians and was none the better, but rather grew worse. There is no hope for you but in Christ. Rest assured, that all the mercy of God is concentrated in the cross. I hear some talk about the uncovenanted mercies of God: there are no such things. The mercies of God are all emptied out into the covenant; God hath put all his grace into the person of Christ, and you shall have none elsewhere. Trust, then, in Christ,—so you shall be blessed, but you shall be blessed nohow else. Again, I urge you to "kiss the Son," and trust Christ, because this is the *sure* way. None have perished trusting in Christ. It shall not be said on earth, nor even in hell shall the blasphemy be uttered, that ever a soul perished that trusted in Christ. "But suppose I am not one of God's elect," says one. But if you trust in Christ you are; and there is no supposing about it. "But suppose Christ did not die for me." But, if you trust him, he did die for you. That fact is proved, and you are saved. Cast yourself simply on him; dare it; run the risk of it; venture on him, venture on him, (and there is no risk.) You shall not find that you have been mistaken. Sometimes I feel anxiety and doubt about my own salvation, and the only way I can get comfort is this: I go back to where I began, and say,—

"I the chief of sinners am;"

I go to my chamber, and once more confess that I am a wretch undone without his sovereign grace, and I pray him to have mercy on me yet again. Depend on it, it is the only way to

heaven, and it is a sure one. If you perish trusting in Christ you will be the first of the kind. Do you think God would allow any to say, "I trusted in Christ, and yet he deceived me; I cast my soul on him, and he was not strong enough to bear to me?" Oh, do not be afraid, I beseech you.

And I conclude now by noticing that this is an *open* salvation Every soul in the world that feels its need of a Saviour, and that longs to be saved, may come to Christ. If God hath convinced thee of sin, and brought thee to know thy need—come, come away! come, come away! come now; trust now in Christ, and thou shalt now find that blessed are all they that trust in him. The door of mercy does not stand on the jar, it is wide open. The gates of heaven are not merely hanging on the latch, but they are wide open both night and day. Come, let us go together to that blessed house of mercy, and drive our wants away. The grace of Christ is like our street drinking fountains, open to every thirsty wanderer. There is the cup, the cup of faith. Come and hold it here, while the water freely flows, and drink. There is no one can come up and say it is not made for you; for you can say, "Oh, yes it is, I am a thirsty soul; *it is meant for me.*" "Nay," says the devil, "you are too wicked." No, but this is a free-drinking fountain. It does not say over the top of the fountain, "No thieves to drink here." All that is wanted at the drinking fountain is simply that you should be willing to drink, that you should be thirsty and desire. Come, then,

> "Let not conscience make you linger,
> Nor of fitness fondly dream;
> All the fitness he requireth,
> Is to feel your need of him."

He has given you this; come and drink; drink freely. "The Spirit and the bride say come; and let him that heareth say come; and whosoever is athirst let him come and take the water of life freely."

SERMON VIII.

HOW SAINTS MAY HELP THE DEVIL.

"That thou mayest bear thine own shame, and mayest be confounded in all that thou hast done, in that thou art a comfort unto them."—EZEKIAL xvi. 54.

IT is not a comfortable state to be at enmity with God, and the sinner knows this. Although he perseveres in his rebellion against the Most High, and turns not at the rebuke of the Almighty, but still goeth on in his iniquity, desperately seeking his own destruction, yet is he aware in his own conscience that he is not in a secure position. Hence, it is, that all wicked men are constantly on the look out for excuses. They find these either in pretended resolutions to reform at some future period, or else in the declaration that reformation is out of their power, and that, acting according to their own nature, they must continue to go on in their iniquities. When a man is willing to find an excuse for being God's enemy, he need never be at a loss. He who hath to find a fact may find some difficulty; but he who would forge a lie may sit at his own fireside and do it. Now, the excuses of sinners are all of them false; they are refugees of lies; and, therefore, we need not wonder that they are exceedingly numerous, and very easy to come at.

One way in which sinners frequently excuse themselves is by endeavoring to get some apology for their own iniquities from the inconsistencies of God's people. This is the reason why there is so much slander in the world. A true Christian is a rebuke to the sinner; wherever he goes he is a living protest against the evil of sin. Hence, it is, that the worldling makes a dead set

upon a pious man. His language in his heart is, "He accuses me to my face; I cannot bear the sight of his holy character; it makes the blackness of my own life appear the more terrible, when I see the whiteness of his innocence contrasting with it." And then the worldling opens all his eyes, and labors to find a fault with the virtuous. If, however, he fails to do so, he will next try to invent a fault; he will slander the man; and, if even there he fails, and the man is like Job, "perfect and upright, and one that feared God and eschewed evil," then the sinner will, like the devil of old, begin to impute some wrong motive to the Christian's innocency. "Doth Job serve God for naught?" said the devil. He could find no fault with Job whatever; his character was untainted and unblemished; but, says he, "he keeps to his religion for what he gets by it." I reckon it to be a glorious accusation when we are falsely charged with being religious for the sake of gain. It shows that our enemies have no other charge that they can bring against us. They have ransacked all the files of their calumny, and they can find nothing tangible, and this is the last they can bring—an imputation upon the motive of the man who has no other motive in all the world than to glorify his God and win sinners from destruction. In this, then, let us glory. If sinners slander us, it is because we make them uneasy. They see that our lives are a protest against them: and what can they do? They must somehow or other answer the Bill which we have filed against them in Heaven's Chancery, and they do it by issuing a Rejoinder against us, and bringing us in as defendants in the case. We glory in this, that we are defendants who can prove our innocence, and we are not ashamed to stand before the bar of God to have our motives tried. There is much, I say, to cheer us in the fact of such a libel. We know the work is done. We are sure our shots have told on their armor, when they are driven to return on us their calumnies and the venom of their wrath. Now we know that they feel the might of our arm; now we know we are not like them, mere drivelings and dwarfs. They have felt our might, and against it they kick, they foam, they vomit forth their wrath. In this, I say, we glory. We have smitten them hard, or else they would not rise against us in this fashion.

Alas! alas! however, sinners have not always to use calumny and lies. It is too true that the church has given a real *bona fide* cause to the wicked for excusing themselves in their sin: the inconsistencies of professors, the want of heart in piety, the absence of devout earnestness, have given sad grounds to the ungodly to justify themselves in their sin. It is upon this melancholy subject that I am about to enter this morning; and may God grant unto all his people who shall feel convicted in their consciences, the spirit of mourning and contrition, that they may vex themselves before God, and confess this great iniquity that they have done, namely, that they have comforted sinners in their sin by their own inconsistency, and have justified the wicked in their rebellion by their own rebellings and revoltings.

This morning I shall deal thus with the subject. First, I shall point out the fact—*the different acts of Christians which have helped to comfort sinners in their sin;* and then, secondly, I shall observe the consequences of this evil—*how much the world at large has been injured by the deeds of professed followers of Christ;* and then, I shall come with *a solemn warning*, bringing out the great battering ram, to dash against these refugees of lies, and moreover, crying with a loud voice to those who are the faithful servants of Christ, to withdraw their hands, and no longer to assist in keeping up the Jericho in which the wicked have entrenched themselves.

I. First, then, it shall be my sad and melancholy business this morning to show certain facts which it were dishonest to deny, namely, that THE ACTS OF MANY OF CHRIST'S FOLLOWERS HAVE BEEN THE CAUSE OF JUSTIFYING AND COMFORTING SINNERS IN THEIR EVIL WAYS.

1. And first I would observe, that the daily inconsistencies of the people of God have much to do in this matter. By inconsistencies I do not exactly mean those grosser crimes into which, at sad and mournful periods, many professors fall; but I mean those frequent inconsistencies which become so common indeed that they are scarcely condemned by society.

The *covetousness* of too many Christians has had this effect. "Look," says the worldling, "this man professes that his inheritance is above, and that his affection is set not on things on earth,

but on the things of heaven; but look at him; he is just as earnest as I am about the things of this world; he can drive the screw home as tightly with his debtor as I can; he can scrape and cut with those that deal with him quite as keenly as ever I have done." Nay, beloved, this is not a mere tale; alas! I have seen persons held up to commendation as successful merchants, whose lives will not bear the test of Scripture, whose business transactions were as hard, as griping, as grasping, as the transactions of the most worldly. How often has it happened that some of you have bent you knee in the sanctuary, and have said, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors," and one hour afterwards your finger has been almost meeting your thumb through the jugular vein of some debtor whom you had seized by the throat! The Church of Christ appears to be as worldly as the world itself, and professors of religion have become as sharp in trade and as ungenerous in their dealings as those that have never been baptized into the Lord Jesus, and have never professed to serve him. And now what does the world say? It throws this in our teeth. If it be accused of loving the things of time and sense, it answers, "And so do you." If we tell the world that it has set its hopes upon a shadow, it replies, "But we have set our hope upon the self same thing in which you are trusting; you are as worldly, as grasping, as covetous as we are; your protest has lost its force; you are no longer witnesses against us —we are accusers of you."

Another point in which the sinner often excuses himself is the manifest *worldliness* of many Christians. You will see Christian men and women as fond of dress, and as pleased with the frivolities of the age, as any other persons possibly could be; just as anxious to adorn their outward person, so as to be seen of men; just as ambitious to win the praise which fools accord to fine dressing, as the most silly fop or the most gaudy among worldly women. What saith the world, when we turn round to it, and accuse it of being a mere butterfly, and finding all its pleasures in gaudy toys? "Oh! yes," it says, "we know your cant, but it is just the same with you. Do you not stand up and sing,

"Jewels to me are gaudy toys,
And gold but sordid dust?"

And yet you are just as fond of glittering as we are; your doctors of divinity pride themselves just as much in their D. D. as any of us in other titles. You are just as punctilious about terms of honor as any of us can be. You talk about carrying the cross; but we do not see it anywhere, except it be a golden cross sometimes hanging on your bosom. You say you are crucified to the world, and the world to you: it is a very merry sort of crucifixion. You say that you mortify your members and deny yourselves: your mortification must be suffered in secret, for it is but very little that we can see of it! Thus the worldling casts back to us our challenge, declaring that we are not sincere, and thus he comforts himself in his sin, and justifies himself in his iniquity.

Look, too, at the manifest *pride* of many professors of religion. You see members of Christian churches as proud as they possibly can be. Their backs are as stiff as if an iron rod were in the centre, they come up to the house of God, and it is a Christian doctrine that God has made of one flesh all nations that dwell upon the face of the earth, but the Christian is as aristocratic as anybody else—just as proud and just as stiff. Is the Christian clothed in broadcloth? How often does he feel it a condescension to own a smock-frock? and how often do you see a sister of Christ in satin, who thinks it something wonderful if she owns a fellow-member in an unwashable print? It is of no use denying it. I do not think that the evil is so common amongst us as it is in some churches; but this I know, that there are *respectable* churches and chapels in which a poor man scarcely dares to show his face. The pride of the church surely has become almost as great as the pride of Sodom of old. Her fulness of bread and her stiffness of neck hath brought her to exalt herself; and whereas it is the real glory of the church that "the poor have the gospel preached unto them," and that the poor have received the Word with gladness, it becomes now the honor of the church to talk of her respectability, of the dignity and station of her members, and of the greatness of her wealth. What, then, do worldlings say? "You accuse us of pride, you are as proud as we are. *You*, the humble followers of Jesus, who washed his saints' feet? Not you; no, you would have no objection, we doubt not, to be

washed by others, but we do not think it likely that you would ever wash ours. *You*, the disciples of the fishermen of Galilee? Not you; you are too fine and great for that. Accuse us not of pride: why, you are as stiff-necked a generation as we ourselves are."

Now, these are only mentioned amongst us as inconsistencies—not as sins. Sins they verily are; and they are such sins that they restrain the Spirit of God from blessing the church. Sins, too, they are that render the wicked callous in their sins, blunt the edge of our rebukes, and prevents the Word of God from working in the hearts of men.

I might mention another sad fact with regard to the church, which often stings us sorely—the various *enmities*, and *strifes*, and *divisions*, that arise. You tell the worldly man that Christians love each other. "Ah!" says he, "you should go over to Ebenezer or to Rehoboth, and see how they love each other. Don't talk of leading a cat and dog life! Look at many of your churches; see how the minister is treated, and how the deacons are in arms, and how the members hate one another. They can scarcely hold a church meeting without abusing each other!" How often is this proved to be true in many churches! And then the worldling says, "You tell us that we bite and devour each other, and that our wars and fightings come from our lusts. Where do your wars and fightings come from? You tell us that our anger and wrath are the effect of sin that dwelleth in us: what causes your divisions and your strifes?" In this way, you see, the testimony of the children of God is rendered invalid, and we help to comfort sinners in their sins.

2. Now it is my mournful duty to go a step further. It is not merely these inconsistencies, but the glaring crimes of some professed disciples, that have greatly assisted sinners in sheltering themselves from the attacks of the Word of God. Every now and then the cedar falls in the midst of the forest. Some one who stood prominent in the church of God, as a professed follower of Jesus, turns aside. "They go out from us because they were not of us; for if they had been of us, doubtless, they would have continued with us; but they went out from us, that it might be manifest that they were not of us." We have wept over high

professors becoming drunkards; we have seen mighty men at religious public meetings becoming scoundrel bankrupts. We have had it dashed in our faces, dozens of times, that religion has often become a cloak for fraud, and that when the world has trusted a religious man with its wealth, that religious man has carried it off with him, and has not been found at the proper time. Oh! this is the great curse of the church. I was thinking only yesterday, with much sorrow in my heart, of the present age and I could not but come to the conclusion, that all the burnings of Pagan tyrants, that all the tortures of Popish executioners, that all the bloody deaths to which God's people were ever put in any one age of the world, have never done so much hurt to the cause of Christ as the inconsistencies of professors of the present time. It was about three years ago, I think, that failures among religious men seemed to be the order of the day, and our papers literally teemed with accusations against the church of God. O my brethren, let us not talk of these things except with mourning and tears. Wrap thyself in sackcloth, O church of God; put away thy laughter, and cast ashes on thine head, for the crown of thy glory is departed, thy garments are stained, and the filthiness of thy skirts witnesses against thee. O church of Christ, thy Nazarites were purer than snow, they were whiter than milk, but now their visage is blacker than a coal, and their hands are defiled with iniquity. Remember thou the time of thy purity, when thy priests were glorious, and thy sons and daughters were clothed in royal apparel. How art thou fallen! how art thou cast down from thy high mountains! Thy princes are clothed in rags; the veils are plucked from the face of thy daughters, and thou thyself art become disconsolate and a widow, by reason of the iniquity of thy sons and of thy daughters. Woe unto us, for thy glory is departed, thy sun is covered with thick darkness, and thy stars withhold their light. The crown is fallen from our head: woe unto us that we have sinned.

My hearers, my soul has carried me away; breathless and panting I return to my humbler but not less earnest style. Remember how vast your powers for mischief! Your ministers may preach as long as they will; but you undo their preaching if you are unholy. If you are inconsistent in your lives, Paul,

Apollos, and Cephas might preach with power; but they have not half the power to build up that you have to pull down. You are the mightiest workmen, ye professors of religion; you can undo infinitely more than we can accomplish.

And now I pause and relieve the shadow of this subject with something which, I fear, is in the sight of God equally vile. How often do the people of God comfort sinners in their sins by their murmurings and their complaints? Oh beloved, we are too much in the habit of covering our faces with sadness, on account of our temporal trials, and too little in the habit of weeping on account of the failings of the church of God! How frequently do you meet with a true Christian full of unbelieving cares! Ah! he says, "All these things are against me." He has food and raiment, but he is not content with it; he has more than that, but his store is a little diminished, and he is very cast down, and he has no faith, and cannot trust the Lord. "Oh!" says the worldling, "see these Christians; they talk about faith, but their faith is not of half so much service to them as my desperation is to me. That hardens my heart, and makes me stand up against affliction a great deal better than their faith in God's providence can do. Why, just look at these saints: a drivelling set of crying creatures; they never have either peace or joy; they are everlastingly pulling long faces, and talking through their noses about their sad trials and troubles; they never have an hour of happiness. Who would be a Christian? *I* don't want to be converted," says the worldling. "Why should I pluck out the sunbeam from my eye, and take the smile from my brow? Why should I profess to follow a God whose servants only worship him by weeping, and never offer any sacrifice but that of groans, and sighs, and murmurs?" Might not a wicked man come in often, when Christians are grumbling together about the badness of the times, about the high price of commodities, and the low rate of wages, and so forth; and might he not say, "Yes, I can see your God treats you very badly; if I were you I'd strike, and have nothing to do with him?" And he would go away laughing, and saying, "Ah! Baal treats me better; I get more pleasure in this world than these Christian people do. Let them have their brave heaven to themselves, if they like; I'm not going

snivelling through this world with them; let me have joy and rejoicing while I may." Don't you think that in this way you and I have done a world of damage to the cause of Christ, and may have helped to comfort sinners in their iniquities?

One other point, and I will have done with this. Perhaps the greatest evil has been done by the cold-heartedness and indifference of religious professors. I charge thee not, O church of God, with inconsistency; I lay no crime at thy door now; it is with nother fault I charge thee—one as grievous as these. I pray thee, plead guilty to it, for thou wilt but speak the truth, and then I pray God that this thy guilt may be cleansed, and that thou mayest offend him no longer with this thine evil. The church of God, at the present age, is cold and lukewarm, and lifeless, compared with what it used to be. When I was preaching in Wales this week, I could not but observe the power which attended the ministry, when there was a living congregation and an earnest company gathered together to hear the Word of God. We have become accustomed to sit in a kind of solemn silence to hear the gospel. Not so in Wales. There is to be heard the voice of acclamation; every person expresses the feelings of his soul in audible prayers and cries to God; and, at last, when the Spirit has descended, you hear the loud cries of "Gogoniant,"—"Glory to God." As each precious sentence drops from the lips of the preacher, it seems to be taken up and fed upon by the people, while they shout aloud for joy. I believe it is a great improvement on our English congregations, and some of our English preachers could not go on in their dull style if sometimes the people had a chance of either hissing them or cheering them on. That, however, is but an index of the cold state of the churches. We are a phlegmatic, cold nation; even Scotch divines are more live than we are; they speak the Word of God with more earnestness than many of our ministers do in England. Cold as we think the north is, yet hath even it become warmer than we are. And now, what says the world to all our coldness? Why, it says—"Ah, this is the kind of religion we like," says the worldling; "we don't like those raving Methodists; we can't stand them; we don't like those earnest indefatigable Christians of the days of Whitfield; oh! no, they are a raving set of folks; we

don't like them; but we like these quiet folks." "Yes,' says the worldling, "I think it is quite right that every man should go to his church and his chapel on a Sunday; but I never could go and hear such raving as Mr. So-and-so gives." Of course you could not; you are an enemy to God, and that is why you like a Laodicean church. That very church which the world likes best is sure to be that which God abhors. The world says, "We like every thing to go on smoothly; we like a man to go to his own parish church, and hear a good, solid, substantial sermon *read;* we like to go up to the meeting-house, and hear a sober, eloquent divine; we don't like any of this furious preaching—any of these earnest exhortations." No, of course you like that of which God has said, "Thou art neither cold nor hot;" God hates such, and that is why sinners love it. But what effect does all this have upon the worldling? Why, just this. He says, "I like you, because you don't rebuke me; I like that kind of religion, because it is no accusation against me. When I see a Christian hot and in earnest about being saved," he says, "it rebukes my own indifference; but when I see a professed Christian just as indifferent about the salvation of men as I am, why, then I say, it is all a farce—nonsense! they don't mean it; the minister does not care a bit about whether souls are saved or not; and as for the church, they make a great deal of noise every now and then at Exeter Hall, about saving some poor blacks far away, but they don't care about saving us." And so a worldling wraps himself up, and goes away in his sin and his iniquity, and perseveres, even to the last, declaring all the while that religion is but a sham, because he sees us careless in solemn matters, and cold concerning ever lasting realities.

Thus I have, mournfully in my own soul, set forth the plan whereby Satan comforts sinners in their sins, even by means of those who ought most sternly to rebuke them.

II. And now for the second point—THE CONSEQUENCES OF THIS EVIL. And here I wish to speak very pointedly and personally to all of you who are professors of religion, and I do hope that you will take every point to yourself, in which you must feel that you have been and are guilty.

Friends, how often have you and I, in the first place, helped to

keep sinners easy in their sin, by our inconsistency! Had we been true Christians, the wicked man would often have been pricked to the heart, and his conscience would have convicted him; but having been unfaithful and untrue, he has been able to sleep on quietly, without any disturbance from us. Do you not think, my dear brothers and sisters, that you have each been guilty here?—that you have often helped to pacify the wicked in their rebellion against God? I must confess myself that I am guilty. I have labored to escape from the sin, but I am not clean delivered from it. I pray each one of you, make a full confession before God, if by your silence when sin has been committed before your eyes, or by a smile when a lascivious joke has been told in your hearing, or if by a constant indifference to the cause of Christ you have led sinners to sleep more securely in the bed of their iniquities.

But to go further still. Do you not think that very often, when a sinner's conscience has been roused, you and I have helped to give it a soporific draught by our coldness of heart, "Hush! Master Conscience," says the sinner; but he will not be still, but cries aloud, "Repent, repent." And then you, a professing Christian pass by, and you administer the laudanum draught of your indifference, and the sinner's conscience falls back again into its slumber, and the reproof that might have been useful is entirely lost upon him. I am sure that this is one of the great crying sins of the church, that we are not now the witnesses of God, as we should be, but often quiet the witness of conscience in the souls of men. Look now to your lives—I am speaking personally to each one—look at yesterday, and the days that went before, and I ask you, and I solemnly charge you to answer that question, "Have you not often assisted, in the first place, to keep men's consciences quiet, and afterwards to send them to sleep when they have been aroused?"

Further; is it not possible that often sinners have been strengthened in their sin by you? They were but beginning in iniquity, and had you rebuked with honesty and sincerity, by your own holy life, they might have been led to see their folly, and might have ceased from sin; but you have strengthened their hands. They have gone forward confidently, because they have

said, "See, a church member leads the way." "So-and-so is not more scrupulous than I," says such an one; "I may do what he does." And so you have helped to strengthen sinners in their sins.

Nay, is it not possible that some of you Christians have helped to confirm men in their sins and to destroy their souls? It is a master-piece of the devil, when he can use Christ's own soldiers against Christ. But this he has often done. I have known many a case. Let me tell a story of a minister—one which I believe to be true and which convicts myself, and therefore I tell it with the hope that it may also waken your consciences and convict you too. There was a young minister once preaching very earnestly in a certain chapel, and he had to walk some four or five miles to his home along a country road after service. A young man, who had been deeply impressed under the sermon, requested the privilege of walking with the minister, with an earnest hope that he might get an opportunity of telling out his feelings to him, and obtaining some word of guidance or comfort. Instead of that, the young minister all the way along told the most singular tales to those who were with him, causing loud roars of laughter, and even relating tales which bordered upon the indecorous. He stopped at a certain house, and this young man with him, and the whole evening was spent in frivolity and foolish talking. Some years after, when the minister had grown old, he was sent for to the bedside of a dying man. He hastened thither with a heart desirous to do good. He was requested to sit down at the bedside; and the dying man, looking at him, and regarding him most closely, said to him, "Do you remember preaching in such-and-such a village on such an occasion?" "I do," said the minister. "I was one of your hearers," said the man, "and I was deeply impressed by the sermon." "Thank God for that," said the minister. "Stop!" said the man, "don't thank God till you have heard the whole story; you will have reason to alter your tone before I have done." The minister changed countenance, but he little guessed what would be the full extent of that man's testimony. Said he, "Sir, do you remember, after you had finished that earnest sermon, I with some others walked home with you? I was sincerely desirous of being led in the right path

that night; but I heard you speak in such a strain of levity, and with so much coarseness too, that I went outside the house, while you were sitting down to your evening meal; I stamped my foot upon the ground; I said that you were a liar, that Christianity was a falsehood; that if you could pretend to be so in earnest about it in the pulpit, and then come down and talk like that, he whole thing must be a sham; and I have been an infidel," aid he, "a confirmed infidel, from that day to this. But I am not an infidel at this moment; I know better; I am dying, and I am about to be damned; and at the bar of God I will lay my damnation to your charge; my blood is on your head.;"—and with a dreadful shriek, and one demoniacal glance at the trembling minister, he shut his eyes and died. Is it not possible that we may have been guilty thus? The bare idea would make the flesh creep on our bones; and yet I think there are few among us who must not say, "That has been my fault, after all." But are there not enough traps, in which to catch souls, without *your* being made Satan's fowlers to do mischief? Hath not Satan legions enough of devils to murder men, without employing you? Are there no hands that may be red with the blood of souls besides yours? O followers of Christ! O believers in Jesus! Will ye serve under the black prince? Will ye fight against your Master? Will ye drag sinners down to hell? Shall *we*—(I take myself in here, more truly than any of you)—shall *we*, who profess to preach the gospel of Christ, by our conversation injure and destroy men's souls?

III. Thus, I think, I have expounded the solemn consequences of this fearful evil. And now I come, in conclusion, and I pray God to help me, while I deal earnestly and solemnly with you, AND BRING OUT THE GREAT BATTERING RAM, TO BEAR AGAINST THIS VAIN EXCUSE OF THE WICKED.

Among this great congregation, I have doubtless a very large number of persons who are not converted to God, and who have continually made this their excuse, "I see so much of the inconsistency of professors, that I do not intend to think about religion myself." My hearer, I conjure thee by the living God, give me thine ear a moment, while I pull this vain excuse of thine to pieces. What hast thou to do with the inconsistencies of an

,other? "To his own master he shall stand or fall." What will it better thee, if one half of all the professors of religion be sent to hell? What comfort will that be to thee, when thou shalt come there thyself? Man, will God require the sins of other people at thine hands? Where is it said that God will punish thee for what another does? Or dost thou imagine that God will reward thee because another is guilty? Thou art surely not foolish enough for that. I ask thee, what canst thou have to do with another's servant? That man is a servant of God, or at least professes to be; if he be not so, what business can it possibly be of thine? If thou shouldst see twenty men drinking poison, would that be a reason why thou shouldst drink it? If, passing over London Bridge, thou shouldst see a dozen miserable creatures leaping off the parapet, there would be a good argument why thou thyself shouldst seek to stop them, but no argument why thou shouldst leap too. What if there be hundreds of suicides? will that excuse thee, if thou shalt shed thine own blood? Do men plead thus in courts of law? Does a man say, "O Judge, excuse me for having been a thief; there are so many hundreds of men that profess to be honest, that are as big thieves as I?" Thou wilt be punished for thine own offences, remember, not for the offences of another. Man! I conjure thee, look this in the face. How can this help to assuage thy misery? How can this help to make thee happier in hell, because thou sayest there are so many hypocrites in this world?

But, besides, thou knowest well enough that the church is not so bad as thou sayest it is. Thou seest some that are inconsistent; but are there not many that are holy? Dost thou dare to say there are none? I tell thee, man, thou art a fool. There are many bad coins in the world, many counterfeits; do you, therefore, say there are no good ones? If you say so, you ar mad; for the very fact that there are counterfeits is a proof tha there must be realities. Would any man think it worth his while to make bad sovereigns if there were no good ones? It is just the quantity of good ones that passes off the few false coins. And so no man would pretend to be a Christian unless there were some good Christians. There would be no hypocrites

if there were not some true men. It is the quantity of true men that helps to pass off the hypocrite in the crowd.

And then again, I say, when thou comest before the bar of God, dost thou think that this will serve thee as an excuse, to begin to find fault with God's own children? Suppose you were brought before a king, an absolute monarch, and you should begin to say, by way of appeal, "O king, I have been guilty, i is true, but your own sons and daughters I do not like; ther are a great many faults in the princes of the blood." Would he not say, "Wretch! thou art adding insult to wickedness; thou art guilty thyself, and now thou dost malign mine own children, the princes of the blood." The Lord will not have thee say that at last. He has pardoned his children; he is ready to par don thee. He sends mercy to thee this day; but if thou reject it, imagine not that thou shalt escape by recounting the sins of the pardoned ones. The rather this shall be an addition to thy sin, and thou shalt perish the more fearfully.

But come, man, once again; I would entreat of thee with all my might. What! canst thou be so foolish as to imagine, that because another man is destroying his own soul by hypocrisy, that this is a reason why thou shouldst destroy thine by indifference? If there be thousands of untrue Christians, so much the more reason why I should be a true one; if there are hundreds of hypocrites, this should make me more earnest to search myself, and should not make me indifferent about the matter. O sinner! thou wilt soon be on thy dying bed, and will it comfort thee there to think, "I have rejected Christ, I have despised salvation, I am perishing in my sins," and to add, "But there are many Christians who are hypocrites!" No; death will tear away that excuse. That will not serve you. And when the heavens are in a blaze, when the pillars of the earth shall reel when God shall come on flying clouds to judge the children of men, when the eternal eyes are fixed upon you, and, like burning lamps, are enlightening the secret parts of your belly, will you then be able to make this an excuse—"Good God! it is true I have damned myself; it is true I have wilfully transgressed; but there were many hypocrites?" Then shall the Judge say, "What hast thou to do with that? Thou hadst nought to do

to interfere with my kingdom and with my judgeship; for thine own offences thou art lost; for thine own rejection of Christ thou shalt perish everlastingly."

And now I conclude, by addressing the people of God with equal solemnity and earnestness.

My dear hearers, if I could weep tears of blood this morning, could not show too much emotion concerning this most solemn point. I do not know that this text ever struck me before yesterday; but I no sooner noticed it, than it came home to me as an accusation. I plead guilty to it, and I pray for forgiveness. I only wish that a like power may attend it to you, that you may feel that you have been guilty too. O friends, can you bear the thought that you may have helped to drag others down to hell? Christ has loved you and pardoned your sins; and will you push others downward? And yet, if you are inconsistent, and especially if you are cold and lukewarm in your religion, you are doing it. "Well," says one, "I don't do much good, but I do no hurt." That is an impossibility. You must be either doing good or evil. There is no border land between truth and sin; a man must be either on land or in the water; and you are either serving God or serving Satan; each day you are increasing your Master's kingdom, or else diminishing it. I cannot bear the thought that any of you should be employed in Satan's camp.

Suppose there ever should be an invasion of this country by France. The tocsin rings from every church-steeple; the drum is sounding in every street, and men are gathering at every market-cross. Peaceful men spring up into soldiers in an instant; and multitudes are marching away to the coast. When we come near it, we behold a troop of soldiers who have climbed our white cliffs, and with bayonets fixed they are marching against us. We, with a tremendous cheer, rush on against them, to drive them back into the sea which girds our beloved country. Suddenly, as we rush forward, we detect scores of Englishmen marching in the same ranks with our foes, and seeking to ravage their own country. What should we say? "Seize those traitors; let not one of *them* escape; put *them* all to death. Can Englishmen take the side of England's enemies? Can they march against our hearths and homes, betray their fatherland, and take

the side of the tyrant Emperor? Can this be? Then let them die the death!"

And yet this day I behold a more mournful spectacle yet. There is King Jesus marching at the head of his troops; and can it be that some of you, who profess to be his followers, are on the other side; that, professing to be Christ's, you are fighting in the ranks of the enemy—carrying the baggage of Satan and wearing the uniform of hell, when you profess to be soldiers of Christ? I know there are such here; God forgive them! God spare them; and may the deserters yet come back, even though they come back in the chains of conviction; May they come back and be saved! O brethren and sisters, there are enough to destroy souls without us—enough to extend the kingdom of Satan without our helping him. "Come out from among them; touch not the unclean thing; be ye separate." Church of God! awake, awake, awake to the salvation of men! Sleep no longer; begin to pray, to wrestle, to travail in birth; be more holy, more consistent, more strict, more solemn in thy deportment! Begin, O soldiers of Christ, to be more true to your colors; and as surely as the time shall come when the church shall thus be reformed and revived, so surely shall the King come into our midst, and we shall march on to certain victory, trampling down our enemies, and getting to our King many crowns, through many victories achieved.

SERMON IX.

HIS NAME—THE MIGHTY GOD.

"The mighty God."—Isaiah, ix. 6.

Other translations of this divine title have been proposed by several very eminent and able scholars. Not that they have any of them been prepared to deny that this translation is, after all, most accurate; but rather that whilst there are various words in the original, which we render by the common appellation of "GOD," it might be possible so to interpret *this* as to show more exactly its definite meaning. One writer, for example, thinks the term might be translated "The Irradiator,"—he who gives light to men. Some think it bears the meaning of "The Illustrious,"—the bright and the shining one. Still there are very few, if any, who are prepared to dispute the fact that our translation is the most faithful that could possibly be given—"the mighty God."

The term here used for God, *El*, is taken from a Hebrew root, which, as I take it, signifies strength; and perhaps a literal translation even of that title might be, "The Strong one," the strong God. But there is added to this an adjective in the Hebrew, expressive of mightiness, and the two taken together express the omnipotence of Christ, his real deity and his omnipotence, as standing first and foremost among the attributes which the prophet beheld. "The mighty God." I do not propose this morning to enter into any argument in proof of the divinity of Christ, because my text does not seem to demand it of me. It does not say that Christ *shall be* "the mighty God,"—that is affirmed in many other places of Sacred Writ; but here it says, "He shall be *called* Wonderful," *called* "Counsellor," *called* "The mighty God;" and I think that therefore I may be excused from enter-

ing into any proof of the fact, if I am at least able to establish the truth of that which is here foretold, inasmuch as Christ is indeed called at this day, and shall be called to the end of the world, "the mighty God."

First, this morning, I shall speak for a moment on *the folly of those who profess to be his followers, but who do not call him "the mighty God."* In the second place I shall try to show *how the true believer practically calls Christ "the mighty God," in many of the acts which concern his salvation;* and then I shall close by noticing *how Jesus Christ has proved himself to be indeed "the mighty God" to us, and in the experience of his church.*

I. First let me point out THE FOLLY OF THOSE WHO PROFESS TO BE THE DISCIPLES OF CHRIST, YET DO NOT, AND WILL NOT, CALL HIM GOD. The question has sometimes been proposed to me, how it is that some of us who hold the divinity of Christ manifest what is called uncharitableness towards those who deny him. We do continually affirm that an error, with regard to the divinity of Christ, is absolutely fatal, and that a man cannot be right in his judgment upon any part of the gospel unless he think rightly of him who is *personally* the very centre of all the purposes of heaven, and the foundation of all the hopes of earth. Nor can we admit of any latitudinarianism here. We extend the right hand of fellowship to all those who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth; but we cannot exchange our Christian greetings with those who deny him to be "very God of very God." And the reason is sometimes asked; for, say our opponents, "We are ready to give the right hand of fellowship to you, why don't you do so to us?" Our reply shall be given thus briefly: "You have no right to complain of us, seeing that in this matter we stand on the defensive. When you declare yourselves to believe that Christ is not the Son of God, you may not be conscious of it, but you have charged us with one of the blackest sins in the entire catalogue of crime." The Unitarians must, to be consistent, charge the whole of us, who worship Christ, with being idolators. Now idolatry is a sin of the most heinous character; it is not an offence against men, it is true, but it is an intolerable offence against the majesty of God. We are ranked by Unitarians, if they be consistent, with the Hottentots. "No," say they, "we

believe that you are sincere in your worship." So is the Hottentot; he bows down before his Fetich, his block of wood or stone, and he is an idolator; and although you charge us with bowing before a man, yet we do hold that you have laid at our door a sin insufferably gross, and we are obliged to repel your accusation with some severity. You have so insulted us by denying the Godhead of Christ, you have charged us with so great a crime, that you can not expect us to sit coolly down and blandly smile at the imputation. It matters not what a man worships; if it be not God, he is an idolator. There is no distinction in principle between worship to a god of mud and a god of gold; nay, further, there is no distinction between the worship of an onion and the worship of the sun, moon, and stars. These are alike idolatries. And though Christ be confessed by the Socinian to be the best of men, perfection's own self; yet if he be nothing more, the vast mass of the Christian world is deliberately assailed with the impudent accusation of being idolators. Yet those who charge us with idolatry, expect us to receive them with cordial kindness. It is not in flesh and blood for us to do so, if we take the low ground of reason; it is not in grace or truth to do so, if we take the high ground of revelation. As men, we are willing to show them respect, we regard them, we pray for them, we have no anger or enmity against them. But when we come to the point of theology, we can not, as we profess to be followers of Christ, tamely see ourselves charged with an offence so dreadful and so heinous as that of idol worship.

I confess I would almost rather be charged with a religion that extenuated murder, than with one that justified idolatry. Murder, great as the offence is, is but the slaying of man; but idolatry is, in its essence, the killing of God; it is the attempt to thrust the Eternal Jehovah out of his seat, and to foist into his place the work of his own hand, or the creature of my own conceit. Shall a man charge me with being so besotted as to worship a mere man? Shall he tell me I am so low and grovelling in my intellect, that I should stoop down to worship my own fellow-creature? and yet does he expect me after that to receive him as a brother professing the same faith? I cannot understand his presumption. The charge against our sanctity of heart is so tremendous, the

accusation is so frightful, that if there have been some severity and bitterness of temper in the controversy, the sin lies upon our opponent, and not on us. For he has charged us with a crime so dreadful, that an upright man must repel it as an insult. But to go further; if Jesus Christ be not a Divine person; if I could once imagine that he was no more than a mere man, I should prefer Mahomet to Christ; and if you ask me why, I think I could clearly prove to demonstration, that Mahomet was a greater prophet than Christ. If Jesus Christ be not the Son of God, co-equal, co-eternal with the Father, he so spake as to induce that belief in the minds of his own disciples, and of his adversaries likewise. Mahomet, with regard to the unity of the Godhead, is so clear and so distinct, that there is no Mahometan to this day that has ever fallen into idolatry. You will find that throughout the whole of the Mahometan world the cry is still sternly uttered and faithfully believed, "There is but one God, and Mahomet is his prophet." Now, if Christ were but a good man and a prophet, why did he not speak more decisively? Why has he not left on record a war cry for the Christian, which would be as explicit and decisive as that of Mahomet? If Christ did not mean to teach that he himself is God, at least he was not very clear and definite in his denial, and he has left his disciples extremely in the dark, the proof whereof is to be found in the fact, that at the present day, nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand of the whole of the professed followers of Christ, do receive him, and bow down before him, as being the very God. And if he is not God, I deny his right to be esteemed as a prophet. If he is not God, he was an imposter, the grandest, the greatest of deceivers that ever existed. This, of course, is no argument to the man who denies the faith, and does not avow himself to be a follower of Christ. But to the man that is Christ's follower, I do hold that the argument is irresistible, that Christ could not have been a good and great prophet, if he were not what he certainly led us to believe himself to be, the Son of God, who thought it not robbery to be equal with God,—the very God, by whom all things were made, and without whom was not any thing made that is made.

I will say yet another thing, which may startle the believer, but

which is intended rather to reduce the heterodox doctrine of Christ not being God to an absurdity. If Christ were not the Son of God, his death, so far from being a satisfaction for sin, was a death most richly and righteously deserved. The Sanhedrim before which He was tried was the recognized and authorized legislature of the country. He was brought before that Sanhedrim, charged with blasphemy, and it was upon that charge that they condemned him to die, because he made himself the Son of God. Now, I do not hesitate honestly to aver, that if I had been called on to plead in that case, I should have pleaded an avowal, and that, moreover, I should have stood up, and said and felt, that I had a clear case before me, which nothing but lying and perjury could ever have put on one side, if Jesus of Nazareth had been charged with having declared himself to be the Son of God. Why, his whole preaching seemed to derive from thence its unrivalled authority. There was continually in his actions and in his words, a claim to be something more than man ever could lay claim to. And when he was brought before the Sanhedrim, witnesses enough might have been found, to prove that he had made himself the Son of God; if he were not so, his condemnation for blasphemy was the justest sentence that ever was pronounced, and his crucifixion on Calvary was absolutely the most righteous execution that ever was performed by the hand of the government. It is his being verily God, that frees him from the charge of blasphemy. It is the fact that he is God, and that his Godhead is not to be denied, that makes his death an unrighteous deicide at the hand of apostate man, and renders it, as before God, an acceptable sacrifice for the sins of all the people whom he redeemed with his most precious blood. But if he be not God, I do repeat, that there is no reason whatever why we should have had a New Testament written; for there would be then nothing in the sublime central fact of that New Testament but the righteous execution of one who certainly deserved to die.

Do you remember, my dear friends, when the apostle Paul was preaching on the resurrection of the dead, in his letter to the Corinthians, how he uses an *ex post facto* argument, to show the natural consequences, if it were possible to overturn the truth? He says, "if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is

also vain, and ye are yet in your sins." Now, I may fairly use the apostle's line of argument in reference to the Godhead and Sonship of Christ, of which his resurrection gave such a palpable demonstration: "If Christ be not the Son of God, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain, and ye are yet in your sins:" all our visions of heaven are blasted and withered: the brightness of our hope is quenched for ever; that rock on which our trust is built, turns out to be nothing better than mere sand if the divinity of Christ be not proved. All the joy and consolation we ever had in this world, in our belief that his blood was sufficient to atone for sin, has been but a dream of fancy and a "figment of idle brains;" all the communion we have ever had with him has been but an illusion and a trance, and all the hopes we have of beholding his face in glory, and of being satisfied when we awake in his likeness, are but the foulest delusions that ever cheated the hopes of man. Oh, my brethren, and can any of you believe that the blood of all the martyrs has been shed as a witness to a lie? Have all those who have rotted in Roman dungeons, or have been burned at the stake because they witnessed that Christ was God, died in vain? Verily, if Christ be not God, we are of all men the most miserable. To what purpose is the calumny and abuse that we have had to endure day after day? to what purpose are our repentance, our sighs, our tears? to what purpose is our faith? to what purpose have our fears and bodings been supplanted by our hope and confidence? to what purpose our joy and our rejoicing, if Christ be not the Son of God? Will you put yourselves all down for fools? can you imagine that God's Word has misguided you—that prophets and apostles, and martyrs and saints, have all leagued together to lead you into a trap and to delude your souls? God forbid that we should think such a thing. There is no folly in the world that has in it so much as a doit of madness, compared with the folly of denying the divinity of Christ, and then professing to be his followers. No, beloved:—

"Let all the forms that men devise,
Assault our faith with treacherous art;
We'll call them vanity and lies,
And bind the gospel to our heart!"—

We will write *this* on the forefront of our banner,—"Christ is God; co-equal and co-eternal with his Father; very God of very God, who counted it not robbery to be equal with God."

II. This brings me to the second part of the subject: How DO WE CALL CHRIST "THE MIGHTY GOD?" Here there is no dispute whatever; I am now about to speak of matters of pure fact Whether Christ be mighty God or not, it is quite certain that we are in the constant habit of calling him so. Not, I mean, by the mere utterance of the term, but we do so in a stronger way, in fact; and actions speak louder than words.

Now, beloved, I will soon prove that you and I are in the habit of calling Christ God. And I will prove it first, because it is our delight, and our joy and our privilege to attribute to him the attributes of Deity.

In hours of devout contemplation, how often do we look up to him as being *the Eternal Son.* You and I sit down in our chambers, and in our house of prayer, and as we muse upon the grea covenant of grace, we are in the habit of speaking of our Lord Jesus Christ's everlasting love to his people. This is one of the jewels of our life, one of the ornaments with which we array ourselves as a bride doth. This is a part of the manna that tasteth like wafers made with honey, upon which our souls are wont to feed. We speak of God's eternal love, of our names having been inscribed in his eternal book, and of Christ's having borne them from before the foundation of the world upon his breast, as our great high-priest, our remembrancer before the throne of heaven. In so doing, we have virtually called him the mighty God; because none but God could have been from everlasting to everlasting. As often as we profess the doctrine of election, we call Christ the mighty God; as often as we talk of the eternal covenant, ordered in all things and sure, so often do we proclaim him to be God: because we speak of him as an everlasting one, and none could be from everlasting but one who is self-existent, who is God.

Again: how frequently do we repeat over to ourselves that precious verse, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." We are always in the habit of ascribing to him *immutability.* Some of our choicest hymns are founded on that circumstance, and our richest hopes flow from that attribute.

We know that all things will change. We are convinced that we ourselves are mutable as the winds, and as easily moved as the sand by the waves of the sea; but we know that our Redeemer liveth, and we cannot entertain a suspicion of any change in his love, his purpose, or his power. How often do we sing:

"Immutable his will,
Though dark may be my frame,
His loving heart is still
Unchangeably the same.
My soul through many changes goes:
His love no variation knows!"

Do you not see that you have in fact called him God, because none but God is immutable? The creature changes. This is written on the forefront of creation—"Change!" The mighty ocean, that knows no furrows on its brow, changeth at times, and at times shifteth its level. It moveth hither and thither, and we know that it is to be licked up with forked tongues of flame, and yet we ascribe to Christ immutability. We do, then, in fact, ascribe to him divinity, for none but the divine can be immutable.

Is it not also our joy to believe that wherever two or three are gathered together in Christ's name, there is he in the midst of them? Do we not repeat it in all our prayer-meetings? Perhaps some minister in Australia began the solemnities of public worship this day with the reflection that Jesus Christ was with him, according to his promise, and I know that as I came here the same reflection comforted me, "Yea, I am with you alway even to the end of the world,"—that wherever a Christian is found, there God is. And though there be but two or three met in a barn, or on the greensward under the canopy of God's blue sky, yet there Christ vouchsafes his presence. Now I ask you, have we not ascribed to Christ omnipresence? and who can be omnipotent but God? Have we not thus in fact, then, though not in words, called Christ "God?" How is it possible for us to dream of Him as being here, and there, and every where; in the bosom of his Father, with the angels, and in the hearts of the contrite all at the same time, if he be not God? Grant me that he is

omnipresent, and you have said that he is God, for none but God can be present every where. Again, are we not also wont to ascribe to Christ omniscience? You believe when your heart is aching that Christ knows your pains, and that he reckons every groan; or, at least, if *you* do not believe it, it is always *my* satisfaction to know that—

> "He feels at his heart
> All my sighs and my groans."

And so he does yours. Wherever you are, you believe that he hears your prayers, that he sees your tears, that he knows your wants, that he is ready to pardon your sins; that you are better known to him than you are to yourself. You believe that he searches your hearts, and tries your reins, and that you never can come to him without finding him full of sympathy, and full of love. Now do you not see that you have ascribed omniscience to him? and therefore, though not in words, you have in accents louder than words, called him the mighty God; for you have assumed that he is omniscient, and who can be omniscient but the very God of very God?

I shall not stop to descant upon the other attributes, but I think we might prove that we have each of us ascribed to Christ all the attributes of the Godhead in our daily life and in our constant trust and intercession. I am sure that it is true of many loving hearts of God's own children here. We have called him the mighty God, and if others have not called him so, nevertheless the text is verified by our faith. "He shall be called wonderful, counsellor, the mighty God." So he is, and so he shall be, world without end.

And now I have another proof to offer, that Christ is called "the mighty God." We call him so in many of his offices. We believe this morning that Christ is the mediator between God and man. If we would understand the term mediator or daysman, we must interpret it as Job did, one "that might lay his hand upon us both." We are accustomed to say that Jesus Christ is the mediator of the new covenant, and we offer our prayers to God through him, because we believe that he mediates between us and the Father. Let it once be granted, then,

that Christ is the mediator, and you have asserted his divinity. You have virtually called him the Son of God; and you have granted his humanity, for he must put his hand upon both; therefore he must put his hand upon man in our nature; he must be touched with a feeling of our infirmities, and be in all points like as we are. But he is not a mediator unless he can put his hand upon God, unless, as fellow of the Eternal One, he shall be able without blasphemy to place his hand upon the divine Being. There is no mediatorship unless the hand is put on both, and who could put his hand on God but God? Can cherubim or seraphim talk of laying their hands on the Divine? Shall they touch the Infinite? "Dark with insufferable light his skirts appear"—then what is He Himself in the glorious Essence of Deity?—an all-devouring and consuming fire. Only God can put his hand on God; and yet Christ hath this high prerogative; for mark, there is no mediatorship established, there cannot be, unless the two are linked. If you wished to build a bridge you might commence on this side of the river, but if you have not connected it with the other side, you have not built the bridge. There can be no mediatorship unless the parties are fully linked. The ladder must have its feet on earth but it must reach to heaven, for if there were a single breach we should fall from its summit and perish. There must be entire communication between the two. Do you not see, therefore, that in calling Christ mediator we have in fact called him the mighty God?

But again: we call Christ our Saviour. Now, have any of you that foolish credulity which would lead you to trust in a man for the everlasting salvation of your soul? If you have, I pity you: your proper place is not in a Protestant assembly, but among the deluded votaries of Rome. If you can commit the keeping of your soul to one like yourself, I must indeed mourn over you and pray that you may be taught better. But you do trust your salvation to him whom God hath set forth for a propitiation, do you not, O follower of Jesus? Can you not say all your hope is fixed on him, for he is all your salvation and all your desire? Does not your spirit rest on that unbuttressed pillar of his entire satisfaction, his precious death and burial, his glorious resurrection and ascension? Now, observe, you are either resting on

man, or else you have declared Christ to be "the mighty God." When I say I put my faith in him, I do most honestly declare that I dare not trust even to him, if I did not believe him to be God. I could not put my trust in any being that was merely created. God forbid that my folly should ever go to such an extent as that. I would sooner trust myself than trust any other man, and yet I dare not trust myself, for I should be accursed. "Cursed is he that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm." And would the Socinian have me to believe that I am to preach faith in Christ, and that yet, if my hearers trust Crist, they will be accursed, as they assuredly must be, if he is nothing but man, for, again I repeat it, "cursed is he that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm." You get a blessing by faith in Jesus, but how? Is it not because—"Blessed is he that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is?" Christ is very Jehovah, and therefore the blessing comes to those who trust in him. So, then, as often as ye put your trust in Jesus, for time and eternity, ye have called him "the mighty God."

This subject is capable of the greatest expansion, and I do believe there is sufficient interest attached to it to warrant me in keeping you to a late hour this day, but I shall not do so. There has been enough said, I think, to prove, at least, that we are in the habit continually of calling Christ "the mighty God."

III. My third proposition is to explain to you HOW CHRIST HAS PROVED HIMSELF TO US TO BE "THE MIGHTY GOD." And here, beloved, without controversy, great is the mystery of Godliness, for the passage from which the text is taken says, "Unto us a child is born." A child! what can that do? A child! it totters in its walk, it trembles in its steps—and it is a child newly born. Born! what, an infant hanging on its mother's breast—an infant deriving its nourishment from a woman? That! can that work wonders? Yea, saith the prophet, "Unto us a child is born." But then it is added, "Unto us a Son is given." Christ was not only born, but given. As man he is a child born, as God he is the Son given. He comes down from on high; he is given by God to become our Redeemer. But here behold the wonder! "His name," this child's name, "shall be called

Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God." Is this child, then, to us the mighty God? If so, O brethren, without controversy, great is the mystery of Godliness indeed! And yet, just let us look through the history of the church, and discover whether we have not ample evidence to substantiate it. This child born, this Son given, came into the world to enter into the lists against sin. For thirty years, and upwards, he had to struggle and wrestle against temptations more numerous and more terrible than man had ever known before. Adam fell when but a woman tempted him; Eve fell when but a serpent offered fruit to her; but Christ, the second Adam, stood invulnerable against all the shafts of Satan, though tempted he was in all points, like as we are. Not one arrow out of the quiver of hell was spared; the whole were shot against him. Every arrow was aimed against him with all the might of Satan's archers, and that is no little! And yet, without sin, or taint of sin, more than conqueror he stood. Foot to foot with Satan, in the solitude of the wilderness; hand to hand with him on the top of the pinnacle of the temple; side by side with him in the midst of a busy crowd—yet ever more than conqueror. He gave him battle wherever the adversary willed to meet him, and at last, when Satan gathered up all his might, and seized the Saviour in the garden of Gethsemane, and crushed him till he sweat as it were great drops of blood, then, when the Saviour said, "Nevertheless, not as I will but as thou wilt," the tempter was repulsed. "Hence! hence!" Christ seemed to say; and away the tempter fled, nor dare return again. Christ, in all his conquests over sin, does seem to me to have established his Godhead. I never heard of any other creature that could endure such temptation as this. Look at the angels in heaven; how temptation entered there, I know not; but this I know, that Satan, the great archangel, sinned, and I know that he became the tempter to the rest of his companions, and drew with him a third part of the stars of heaven. Angels were but little tempted; some of them not tempted at all, and yet they fell. And then look at man; slight was his temptation, yet he fell. It is not in a creature to stand against temptation; he will yield if the temptation be strong enough. But Christ stood, and, it seems to me, that in his standing he proved Himself to have the

omni-radiant purity, the immaculate holiness of Him before whom angels veil their faces, and cry, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth."

But these proofs might appear insufficient, if he did not accomplish more than this. We know also that Christ proved himself to be the "mighty God" from the fact that at last all the sins of all his people were gathered upon his shoulders, and 'he bare them in his own body on the tree." The heart of Christ became like a reservoir in the midst of mountains. All the tributary streams of iniquity, and every drop of the sins of his people, ran down and gathered into one vast lake, deep as hell and shoreless as eternity. All these met, as it were, in Christ's heart, and yet he endured them all. With many a sign of human weakness, but with convincing signs of divine omnipotence, he took all our griefs and carried all our sorrows. The divinity within strengthened his manhood, and though wave after wave rolled over his head, till he sank in deep mire where there was no standing, and all God's waves and his billows had gone over him, yet did he lift up his head, and more than a conqueror, at length, he put the sins of his people to a public execution. They are dead. They have ceased to be; and, if they be sought for, they shall not be found any more for ever. Certainly, if this be true, he is "the mighty God" indeed.

But he did more than this, he descended into the grave, and there he slept, fast fettered with the cold chains of death. But the appointed hour arrives—the sunlight of the third day gave the warning, and he snapped the bands of death as if they were but tow, and came forth to life as "the Lord of life and glory." His flesh did not see corruption, for he was not able to be holden by the bands of death. And who shall be the death of death, the plague of the grave, the destroyer of destruction, but God? Who but immortal life, who but the Self-existent, shall trample out the fires of hell? who, but he whose Being is eternal, without beginning, and without end, shall burst the shackles of the grave? He proved himself then, when he led captivity captive, and crushed death and ground his iron limbs to powder—he proved himself then to be the mighty God.

Oh, my soul, thou canst say that he has proved himself in

thy heart to be a mighty God. Sins, many hath he forgiven thee, and relieved thy conscience of the keen sense of guilt; griefs innumerable hath he assuaged, temptations insurmountable hath he overcome; virtues once impossible hath he implanted; grace in its fulness hath he promised, and in its measure hath he given. My soul bears record that what has been done for me could never have been done by a mere man; and you would rise from your seats, I am sure, if it were needful, and say, "Yes, he that hath loved me, washed me from my sins, and made me what I am, must be God; none but God could do what he has done, could bear so patiently, could bless so lavishly, forgive so freely, enrich so infinitely. He is, he must be, we will crown him such —'The mighty God.'"

And, in conclusion, lest I weary you, permit me now to say, I beg and beseech of you all present, as God the Spirit shall help you, come and put your trust in Jesus Christ; he is "the mighty God." Oh, Christians, believe him more than ever; cast your troubles constantly on him; he is "the mighty God;" go to him in all your dilemmas; when the enemy cometh in like a flood, this mighty God shall make a way for your deliverance; take to him your griefs, this mighty God can alleviate them all; tell him your backslidings and sins, this mighty God shall blot them out. And, O sinners, ye that feel your need of a Saviour, come to Christ and trust him, for he is "the mighty God." Go to your houses, and fall on your knees and confess your sins, and then cast your poor, guilty, helpless, naked, defenceless souls before his omnipotence, for he is able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by him, because when he died he was not manhood, without divinity, but he was "the mighty God." This, I say, we will write on our banners, from this day forth and for ever; this shall be our joy and our song—the child born nd the Son given is to us "the mighty God."

SERMON X.

THE BELIEVER'S CHALLENGE.

"Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."—ROMANS, viii. 34.

THE protest of an innocent man against the charge of an accuser may well be strong and vehement. But here we have a more uncommon and a sublimer theme. It is the challenge of a justified sinner protesting with holy and inspired fervor that his character is clear and his conscience clean, even in the sight of heaven. Yet it is not the natural innocence of his heart, but the perfect mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ, which gives him this amazing confidence. May the Spirit of God enable me to expound to you this most blessed portion of God's Word.

We have before us, in the text, the four marvellous pillars upon which the Christian rests his hope. Any one of them were all-sufficient. Though the sins of the whole world should press on any one of these sacred columns, it would never break nor bend. Yet for our strong consolation, that we may never tremble or fear, God hath been pleased to give to us these four eternal rocks, these four immovable foundations, upon which our faith may rest and stand secure. But why is this? why needeth the Christian to have such firm, such massive foundations? For this simple reason: he is himself so doubtful, so ready to mistrust so difficult to be persuaded of his own security. Therefore, hath God, as it were, enlarged his arguments. One blow might, we should have imagined, have been enough to have smitten to death our unbelief for ever; the cross ought to have been enough for the crucifixion of our infidelity; yet God, foreseeing the strength

of our unbelief, hath been pleased to smite it four times that it might be razed to rise no more. Moreover, he well knew that our faith would be sternly attacked. The world, our own sin, and the devil, he foresaw would be continually molesting us; therefore, hath he entrenched us within these four walls, he hath engarrisoned us in four strong lines of circumvallation. We cannot be destroyed. We have bulwarks, none of which can possibly be stormed, but when combined they are so irresistible, they could not be carried, though earth and hell should combine to storm them. It is, I say, first, because of our unbelief; and secondly, because of the tremendous attacks our faith has to endure, that God has been pleased to lay down four strong consolations, with which we may fortify our hearts whenever the sky is overcast, or the hurricane is coming forth from its place.

Let us now notice these four stupendous doctrines. I repeat it again, any one of them is all-sufficient. It reminds me of what I have sometimes heard of the ropes that are used in mining. It is said that every strand of them would bear the entire tonnage, and consequently, if each strand bears the full weight that will ever be put upon the whole, there is an absolute certainty of safety given to the whole when twisted together. Now each of these four articles of our faith is sufficient to bear the weight of the sins of the whole world. What must be the strength when the whole four are interlaced and intertwisted, and become the support of the believer? The apostle challenges the whole world, and heaven and hell, too, in the question, "Who is he that condemneth?" and in order to excuse his boldness, he gives us four reasons why he can never be condemned. "Christ *has died*, yea, rather, is *risen again*, who is even *at the right hand of God*, who also *maketh intercession for us*." We shall first look over these four pillars of the believer's faith, and then, afterwards, we shall ourselves take up the apostle's challenge, and cry, "Who is he that condemneth?"

I. The first reason why the Christian never can be condemned, is because CHRIST HATH DIED. We believe that in the death of Christ, there was a full penalty paid to the divine justice for all the sins which the believer can possibly commit. We teach every Sabbath day, that the whole shower of divine wrath was

poured upon Christ's head, that the black cloud of vengeance emptied out itself upon the cross, and that there is not left in the book of God a single sin against the believer, nor can there possibly be even a particle of punishment ever exacted at the hand of the man that believeth in Jesus, for this reason—that Jesus has been punished to the full. In full tale hath every sin received sentence in his death. He hath suffered, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God. And now, if you and I are enabled this morning to go beneath the bloody tree of Calvary, and shelter ourselves there, how safe we are! Ah! we may look around and defy all our sins to destroy us. This shall be an all-sufficient argument to shut their clamorous mouths, "Christ hath died." Here cometh one, and he cries, "Thou hast been a blasphemer.' Yes, but Christ died a blasphemer's death, and he died for blasphemers. "But thou hast stained thyself with lust." Yes, but Christ died for the lascivious. The blood of Jesus Christ, God's own Son, cleanseth us from all sin; so away, foul fiend, that also has received its due. "But thou hast long resisted grace, and long stood out against the warnings of God." Yes, but "Jesus died;" and say what thou wilt, O conscience, remind me of what thou wilt; lo, this shall be my sure reply—"Jesus died." Standing at the foot of the cross, and beholding the Redeemer in his expiring agony, the Christian may indeed gather courage. When I think of my sin, it seems impossible that any atonement should ever be adequate; but when I think of Christ's death it seems impossible that any sin should ever be great enough to need such an atonement as that. There is in the death of Christ enough, and more than enough. There is not only a sea in which to drown our sins, but the very tops of the mountains of our guilt are covered. Forty cubits upwards hath this red sea prevailed. There is not only enough to put our sins to death, but enough to bury them and hide them out of sight. I say it boldly and without a figure,—the eternal arm of God now nerved with strength, now released from the bondage in which justice held it, is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Christ.

This was my subject last Sabbath-day, therefore I take it I shall be fully justified in leaving the first point—that *Christ hath died*, while I pass on to the other three. You will bear in mind that I

discussed the doctrine of the satisfaction of Christ's atonement by his death, in the sermon of last Sunday morning. I come, therefore, to notice the second argument. Our first reason for knowing that we cannot be condemned is, because Christ has died for us.

II. The second reason a believer hath, is—that CHRIST HAS RISEN AGAIN.

You will observe that the apostle has here prefixed the words 'yea rather!" Do you see the force of this expression? As much as to say, it is a powerful argument for our salvation that Christ died; but it is a still more cogent proof that every believer shall be saved, that Christ rose again from the dead. This does not often strike us. We generally receive more comfort at the cross than we do at the empty sepulchre. And yet this is just through our ignorance and through the blindness of our eyes; for verily to the enlightened believer there is more consolation in Jesus arising from the tomb than there is in Jesus nailed to the cross "Yea rather," said the apostle, as if he would have it that this is a still more powerful argument. Now what had the resurrection of Christ from the dead to do with the justification of a believer? I take it thus: Christ by his death paid to his Father the full price of what we owed him. God did, as it were, hold a bond against us which we could not pay. The alternative of this bond, if not paid, was that we should be sold for ever under sin, and should endure the penalty of our transgressions in unquenchable fire. Now, Jesus by his death paid all the debt; to the utmost farthing that was due from us to God Christ did pay by his death. Still the bond was not cancelled until the day when Christ rose from the dead; then did his Father, as it were, rend the bond in halves, and blot it out, so that thenceforward it ceases to have effect. It is true that death was the payment of the debt but the resurrection was the public acknowledgment that th debt was paid. "Now," says Paul, "yea rather, he has risen from the dead." O Christian, thou canst not be condemned, for Christ has paid the debt. Look at his gore, as it distills from his body in Gethsamene and from the accursed tree. But rather, lest there should be a shadow of a doubt that thou canst not be condemned, thy debts are cancelled. Here is the full receipt; the

resurrection hath rent the bond in twain. And now at God's right hand there is not left a record of thy sin; for when our Lord Jesus Christ quitted the tomb he left thy sin buried in it—once for all cast away—never to be recovered. To use another figure,—Christ's death was as it were the digging out of the gold of grace out of the deep mines of Jesus' sufferings. Christ coined, so to speak, the gold which should be the redemption of his children, but the resurrection was the minting of that gold it stamped it with the Father's impress, as the current coin of the realm of heaven. The gold itself was fused in the atoning sacrifice, but the minting of it, making it into that which should be the current coin of the merchant, was the resurrection of Christ. Then did his father stamp the atonement with his own image and his own superscription. On the cross I see Jesus dying for my sins as an expiating sacrifice; but in the resurrection I see God acknowledging the death of Christ, and accepting what he has done for my indisputable justification. I see him putting his own imprimatur thereupon, stamping it with his own signet, dignifying it with his own seal, and again I cry, "Yea rather, who is risen from the dead,"—who then can condemn the believer? To put Christ's resurrection yet in another aspect. His death was the digging of the well of salvation. Stern was the labor, toilsome was the work; he dug on, and on, and on, through rocks of suffering, into the deepest caverns of misery; but the resurrection was the springing up of the water. Christ digged the well to its very bottom, but not a drop did spring up; still was the world dry and thirsty, till, on the morning of the resurrection, a voice was heard, "Spring up, O well," and forth came Christ himself from the grave, and with him came the resurrection and the life; pardon and peace for all souls sprang up from the deep well of his misery. Oh! when I can find enough for my faith to be satisfied with even in the digging of the well, what shall be my satisfaction when I see it overflowing its brim, and springing up with life everlasting? Surely the apostle was right when he said, "Yea rather, who hath risen from the dead." And yet another picture. Christ was in his death the hostage of the people of God. He was the representative of all the elect. When Christ was bound to the tree I see

my own sin bound there; when he died every believer virtually died in him; when he was buried we were buried in him, and when he was in the tomb, he was, as it were, God's hostage for all his church, for all that ever should believe on him. Now, as long as he was in prison, although there might be ground of hope, it was but as light sown for the righteous; but when the hostage came out, behold the first fruit of the harvest! When God said, 'Let my Anointed go free, I am satisfied and content in him," then every elect vessel went free in him; then every child of God was released from durance vile no more to die, not to know bondage or fetter for ever. I do see ground for hope when Christ is bound, for he is bound for me; I do see reason for rejoicing when he dies, for he dies for me, and in my room and stead; I do see a theme for solid satisfaction in his burial, for he is buried for me; but when he comes out of the grave, having swallowed up death in victory, my hope bursts into joyous song. He lives, and because he lives I shall live also. He is delivered, and I am delivered too. Death hath no more dominion over him and no more dominion over me; his deliverance is mine, his freedom mine for ever. Again, I repeat it, the believer should take strong draughts of consolation here. Christ is risen from the dead, how can we be condemned? There are e'en stronger arguments for the non-condemnation of the believer in the resurrection of Christ than in his precious death and burial. I think I have shown this; only may God give us grace to rest upon this precious—"yea rather, who is risen from the dead."

III. The next clause of the sentence reads thus: "WHO IS EVEN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD." Is there not any word of special commendation to this? You will remember the last one had, "Yea rather." Is there nothing to commend this? Well, if not in this text, there is in another. If, at your leisure, you read through the fifth chapter of the epistle to the Romans, you will there very readily discover that the apostle proves that if Christ's death be an argument for our salvation, his life is a still greater one. He says in the tenth verse of that chapter, "If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, *much more*"—that's the word I wanted—"*much more* we shall be saved by his life." We may look, then, at this third

clause as having a "much more" before it, comparing Scripture with Scripture. We cannot be condemned, for "Christ hath died. Yea rather, is risen again; (*much more*) is even at the right hand of God." Here is an argument which hath much more power, much more strength, much more force than even Christ's death. Sometimes I have thought that impossible. Last Lord's day I thought, by God's good help, I was enabled to persuade some of you that the death of Christ was an argument too potent to be ever denied—an argument for the salvation of all for whom he died. Much more, let me now tell you, is his life, much more the fact that he lives, and is at the right hand of the Father. Now I must call your attention to this clause, remarking that in other passages of God's Word Christ is said to have sat down *for ever* at the right hand of God. Do observe with care the fact, that he is always described in heaven as sitting down. This seems to me to be one material argument for the salvation of the believer—Christ *sits* in heaven. Now, he never would sit if the work were not fully done. Jesus, when he was on earth, had a baptism to be baptized with, and how was he straitened until it was accomplished! He had not time so much as to eat bread, full often, so eager was he to accomplish all his work. And I do not, I cannot imagine that he would be sitting down in heaven in the posture of ease unless he had accomplished all—unless "It is finished!" were to be understood in its broadest and most unlimited sense. There is one thing I have noticed, in looking over the old Levitical law, under the description of the tabernacle. There were no seats whatever provided for the priests. Every priest stands daily ministering and offering sacrifice for sin. They never had any seats to sit on. There was a table for the show-bread, an altar, and a brazen laver; yet there was no seat. No priest sat down; he must always stand; for there was always work to be accomplished, always something to be done. For the great high-priest of our profession, Jesus, the Son of God, hath taken his seat at the right hand of the majesty on high. Why is this? Because now the sacrifice is complete for ever, and the priest hath made a full end of his solemn service. What would the Jew have thought if it had been possible for a seat to have been introduced into the sanctu

ary, and for the high-priest to sit down? Why, the Jew would then have been compelled to believe that it was all over, the dispensation was ended; for a sitting priest would be the end of all. And now we may rest assured, since we can see a sitting Christ in heaven, that the whole atonement is finished, the work is over, he hath made an end of sin. I do consider that in this there is an argument why no believer ever can perish. If he could, if there was yet a chance of risk, Christ would not be sitting down; if the work were not so fully done that every redeemed one should at last be received into heaven, he would never rest nor hold his peace.

Turning, however, more strictly to the words of the text, "Who is even at the right hand of God"—what meaneth this? It means, first of all, that Christ is now in the honorable position of an accepted one. The right hand of God is the *place of majesty, and the place of favor too.* Now, Christ is his people's representative. When he died for them they had rest; when he rose again for them, they had liberty; when he was received into his Father's favor, yet again, and sat at his own right hand, then had they favor, and honor, and dignity. Do you not remember, that the two sons of Zebedee asked to sit, one on the right hand and the other on the left? Little did they know that they had already what they asked for—for all the church is now at the right hand of the Father; all the church is now raised up together, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. The raising and elevation of Christ to that throne of dignity and favor, is the elevation, the acceptance, the enshrinement, the glorifying of all his people, for he is their common head, and stands as their representative. This sitting at the right hand of God, then, is to be viewed as the acceptance of the person of the surety, the reception of the representative, and, therefore, the acceptance of our souls. Who is he that condemneth, then? Condemn a man that is at the right hand of God! Absurd! Impossible! Yet am I there in Christ. Condemn a man who sits next to his Father, the King of kings! Yet there is the church, and how can she in the slightest degree incur condemnation, when she is already at the right hand of the Father with her covenant head. And let me further remark, that the right hand is

the place of power. Christ at the right-hand of God signifies that all power is given unto him in heaven and in earth. Now, who is he that condemns the people that have such a head as this? O my soul! what can destroy thee if omnipotence is thy helper! If the ægis of the Almighty covers thee, what sword can smite thee? If the wings of the Eternal are thy shelter, what plague can attack thee? Rest thou secure. If Jesus is thine all-prevailing king, and hath trodden thine enemies beneath his feet; if sin, death, and hell, are now only parts of his empire, for he is Lord of all, and if thou art represented in him, and he is thy guarantee, thy sworn surety, it cannot be by any possibility that thou canst be condemned. While we have an Almighty Saviour, the redeemed must be saved; until omnipotence can fail, and the Almighty can be overcome, every blood-bought redeemed child of God is safe and secure for ever. Well did the apostle say of this —"*much more*—much more than dying and rising again from the dead, he lives at the right hand of God."

IV. And now I come to the fourth; and this also hath an encomium passed upon it—"WHO ALSO MAKETH INTERCESSION FOR US." Our apostle, in the epistle to the Hebrews, puts a very strong encomium upon this sentence. What does he say upon it? A little more than he said about the others. The first one is, "*Yea rather;*" the second one is, "*Much more.*" And what is the third? Remember the passage—"He is able also to save them *unto the uttermost* that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." Lo! this is—"*to the uttermost;*" what we thought, perhaps, to be the very smallest matter in the recital, is just the greatest. "*To the very uttermost*" he is able to save, seeing he ever lives to intercede—the strongest argument of the whole four. Let us try to meet this question, "Why does Christ intercede to-day in heaven?" A quaint old divine says, that "When God, in his justice, rose from his throne to smite the surety, he would make no concession whatever. The surety paid the debt." "Yet," said the Judge, "I will not come down to earth to receive the payment; bring it to me." And therefore the surety first groped through death to fight his way up to the eternal throne, and then mounting aloft by a glorious ascension, dragged his conquered foes behind him, and scattering

mercies with both his hands, like Roman conquerors who scattered gold and silver coins in their triumph, entered heaven. And he came before his Father's throne and said, "There it is; the full price: I have brought it all." God would not go down to the earth for payment; it must be brought to him. This was pictured by the high-priest of old. The high-priest first took the blood, but that was not accepted. He did not bring the mercy-seat outside the veil, to carry the mercy-seat to the blood. No; the blood must be taken to the mercy-seat. God will not stoop when he is just; it must be brought to him. So the high-priest takes off his royal robes, and puts on the garments of the minor priest, and goes within the veil, and sprinkles the blood upon the mercy-seat. Even so did our Lord Jesus Christ. He took the payment and bore it to God,—took his wounds, his rent body, his flowing blood, up to his Father's very eyes, and there he spread his wounded hands and pleaded for his people. Now here is a proof that the Christian cannot be condemned, because the blood is on the mercy-seat. It is not poured out on the ground; it is on the mercy-seat, it is on the throne; it speaks in the very ears of God, and it must of a surety prevail.

But, perhaps, the sweetest proof that the Christian cannot be condemned, is derived from the intercession of Christ, if we view it thus. Who is Christ, and who is it with whom he intercedes? My soul was in raptures when I mused yesterday upon two sweet thoughts; they are but simple and plain, but they were very interesting to me. I thought that had I to intercede for anybody, and do a mediating part, if I had to intercede for my brother with my father, I should feel I had got a safe case in hand. This is just what Jesus has to do. He has to intercede with his Father, and mark, with our Father, too. There is a double precedent to strengthen our confidence that he must prevail. When Christ pleads, he does not plead with one who is stronger than him, or inimical to him, but with his own Father. "My Father," saith he, "it is my delight to do thy will, and it is thy delight to do my will; I *will* then that they, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am." And then he adds this blessed argument, "Father, those for whom I plead are thine own children, and thou lovest them as much as I do," yea, "thou hast loved them as

thou hast loved me." Oh, it is no hard task to plead, when you are pleading with a Father for a brother, and when the advocate can say, "I go to my Father and to your Father, to my God and to your God." Suppose, my dear friends, that any of you were about to be tried for your life, do you think you could trust your advocacy with any man you know? I do really think I should be impatient to speak for myself. But my counsel would say, Now just be quiet, my dear sir, you perhaps may plead more earnestly than I can, because it is for your own life, but then you do not understand the law, you will make some blunder or other, and commit yourself and spoil your own cause." But still I think if my life were in hazard, and I stood in the dock, and my counsel were pleading for me, my tongue would be itching to plead for myself, and I should want to get up and just say, "My lord, I am innocent, innocent as the babe newly born, of the crime laid to my charge. My hands have never been stained with the blood of any man." Oh! I think I could indeed plead if I were pleading for myself. But, do you know, I have never felt that with regard to Christ. I can sit down and let him plead, and I do not want to get up and conduct the pleading myself. I do feel that he loves me better than I love myself. My cause is quite safe in his hands, especially when I remember again that he pleads with *my* Father, and that he is his own Father's beloved Son, and that he is my brother—and such a brother!—a brother born for adversity.

> "Give him, my soul, thy cause to plead,
> Nor doubt the Father's grace."

It is enough; he has the cause, nor would we take it from his hand even if we could—

> "I know that safe with him remains,
> Protected by his power—
> What I've committed to his hands
> Till the decisive hour."

Well did the apostle say, "To the very uttermost he is able to save them that come unto God by him, because he ever lives to make intercession for them."

I have thus given you the four props and pillars of the be-

liever's faith. And now, my hearers, let me just utter this personal appeal to you. What would you give, some of you, if you could have such a hope as this? Here are four pillars. Oh, unhappy souls, that cannot call one of these your own! The mass of men are all in uncertainty; they do not know what will become of them at last. They are discontented enough with life, and yet they are afraid to die. God is angry with them, and they know it. Death is terrible to them; the tomb affrights them, they can carcely understand the possibility of having any confidence this side the grave. Ah, my hearers, what would you give if you could obtain this confidence? And yet it is within reach of every truly penitent sinner. If you are now led to repent of sin; if you will now cast yourself on the blood and righteousness of Christ, your eternal salvation shall be as sure as your present existence. He cannot perish who relies on Christ, and he who hath faith in Jesus may see the heavens pass away, but not God's Word. He may see the earth burned, but into the fire of hell he can never go. He is safe, and he must be saved, though all things pass away.

And now this brings me to the challenge. Fain would I picture the apostle as he appeared when he was uttering it. Hark! I hear a brave, strong voice, crying, "Who shall lay any thing to my charge?" "Who is that? Paul. What! Paul a Christian! I thought Christians were a humble, timid people." "They are so; but not when they are arrayed in the robes and invested with the credentials of their Sovereign. They are lambs in the harmlessness of their dispositions, but they have the courage of lions when they defend the honor of their King. Again I hear him cry, "Who shall lay any thing to my charge?"—and he casts his eyes to heaven. Is not the wretch smitten dead? Will not such presumption as this be avenged? Does he challenge purity to convict him of guilt? O Paul, the thunderbolt of God will mite thee! "No," says he, "it is God that justifieth, I am not afraid to face the highest heaven, since God has said that I am just. I can look upward without distressing fear." "But hush! repeat not that challenge." "Yes," saith he, "I will. Who is he that condemneth?" And I see him look downwards; there lies the old dragon, bound in chains, the accuser of the brethren; and the apostle stares him in the face, and says, "Who shall lay

any thing to the charge of God's elect?" Why, Paul, Satan will bring thundering accusations against thee; art thou not afraid? "No," says he, "I can stop his mouth with this cry, 'It is Christ that died;'—that will make him tremble, for he crushed the serpent's head in that victorious hour. And I can shut his mouth again—'yea rather, that is risen again,' for he took him captive on that day;—I will add, 'who sitteth at the right hand of God. I can foil him with that, for he sits there to judge him and to condemn him for ever. Once more I will appeal to his advocacy 'Who maketh intercession for us.' I can stop his accusation with this perpetual care of Jesus for his people." Again, cries Paul, "Who shall lay any thing to my charge?" There lie the bodies of the saints he has martyred, and they cry from under the altar—"O Lord! how long wilt thou not avenge thine own elect?" Paul says,—"Who can lay any thing to my charge?" and they speak not; "because," says Paul, "I have obtained mercy—who was before a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious, that in me first he might show forth all long-suffering." "Christ hath died, yea rather, hath risen again." And now, standing in the midst of men who mock, and boast, and jeer, he cries—"Who can lay any thing to my charge?" and no one dares to speak, for man himself cannot accuse; with all his malevolence, and acrimony, and malice, he can bring nothing against him; no charge can stand at the bar of God against the man whom he hath absolved through the merits of the death of Christ, and the power of his resurrection.

Is it not a noble thing for a Christian to be able to go where he may, and feel that he cannot meet his accuser; that wherever he may be, whether he walketh within himself in the chambers of conscience, or out of himself amongst his fellow men, or above himself into heaven, or beneath himself into hell, yet is he a justified one, and nothing can be laid to his charge. Who can condemn? Who can condemn? Yea, echo O ye skies; reverberate, ye caverns of the deep. Who can condemn when Christ hath died, hath risen from the dead, is enthroned on high, and intercedes?

But all things pass away. I see the heavens on fire, rolling up like a scroll—I see sun, moon, and stars pale now their feeble

light—the earth is tottering; the pillars of heaven are rocking; the grand assize is commenced—the herald angels descend, not to sing this time, but with thundering trumpets to proclaim, "He comes, he comes to judge the earth in righteousness, and the people in equity." What says the believer now? He says, "I fear not that assize, for who can condemn?" The great white throne is set, the books are opened, men are trembling, fiends are yelling, sinners are shrieking—"Rocks hide us, mountains on us fall;" these make up an awful chorus of dismay. There stands the believer, and, looking round on the assembled universe of men and angels, he cries, "Who shall lay any thing to my charge?" and silence reigns through earth and heaven. Again he speaks, and fixing his eyes full on the Judge himself, he cries, "Who is he that condemneth?" And lo, there upon the throne of judgment sits the only one who can condemn; and who is that? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who sitteth on the right hand of God, who maketh intercession for him. Can those lips say, "Depart, ye cursed," to the man for whom they once did intercede? Can those eyes flash lightnings on the man whom once they saw in sin, and thence with rays of love they did lift him up to joy, and peace, and purity? No! Christ will not belie himself. He cannot reverse his grace; it cannot be that the throne of condemnation shall be exalted on the ruins of the cross. It cannot be that Christ should transform himself at last; but till he can do so, none can condemn. None but he hath a right to condemn, for he is the sole judge of right and wrong, and if he hath died shall he put us to death, and if he hath risen for us, shall he thrust us downwards to the pit, and if he hath reigned for us and hath been accepted for us, shall he cast us away, and if he hath pleaded for us, shall he curse us at the last? No! Come life, come death, my soul can rest on this. He died for me. I cannot be punished for my sin. He rose again, I must rise, and though I die yet shall I live again. He sits at the right hand of God, and so must I. I must be crowned and reign with him for ever. He intercedes, and he must be heard. He beckons me, and I must be brought at length to see his face, and to be with him where he is.

, I will say no more; only may God give us all an interest in these four precious things. An angel's tongue might fail to sing their sweetness, or tell their brightness and their majesty; mine has failed—but this is well. The excellency of the power is in the doctrine, and not in my preaching. Amen.

SERMON XI.

A PSALM OF REMEMBRANCE.

"We have known and believed the love that God hath to us."—1 John, iv. 16.

It is very pleasant to read descriptions of the Holy Land from observant travellers, who, in glowing language, have depicted its interesting scenes. I must confess, that all books which speak of the land where Jesus lived and died have an attraction for me: but how much more delightful must it be, to journey there one's-self, to stand on the very spot where Jesus preached and prayed, and to kneel upon that blood-stained garden of Gethsemane, in which he sweat that sacred sweat of blood. I can scarcely imagine what must be the sensation of a true Christian, when he stands on Calvary, that spot of all others most dear to the believer's soul. All the descriptions that the traveller can possibly give, can never awaken the emotions which would be felt if we were really there ourselves. Now, this law of nature I would transfer to matters of grace. Let me tell you this day what I may concerning the acts of God's goodness in the souls of his people, my description will be dullness itself compared with the glorious reality. If God should lend me help, so that I could, in glowing pictures, portray the amazing love of Christ Jesus to those who believe in him; if I could tell you of their matchless experience, their divine drinkings at the fountain of life and bliss, their heavenly feastings in the banqueting-house, all this would be nothing, compared with what you would feel, if you yourself could taste, and handle, and see, and know, and believe.

Let me add another figure to render this truth yet more ap-

parent. Suppose an eloquent foreigner, from a sunny clime, should endeavor to make you appreciate the fruits of his nation He depicts them to you. He describes their luscious flavor, their cooling juice, their delicious sweetness; but how powerless will be his oration, compared with your vivid remembrance, if you have yourself partaken of the dainties of his land. It is even so with the good things of God; describe them as we may, we can not awaken in you the joy and delight that is felt by the man who lives upon them, who makes them his daily food, his manna from heaven, and his water from the rock. 'Tis feeling, 'tis tasting, 'tis actually receiving and enjoying, which is, after all, the highest oratory with which we can possibly explain to you the sweet and precious things of God.

Now, do you not see that John could specially speak with power, for he spake from his own experience. And do you not perceive that his language cannot be understood, except we put ourselves in his position, and are able to echo his words, when he said, "We have known and believed the love that God hath to us?" There are many here, I doubt not, who can join in this declaration of the apostle. And may the Holy Spirit help me, while I endeavor to draw out an expression of grateful thanks from those who have believed and known the love which God hath to them.

First, then, I shall look upon my text as being *an abstract of Christian experience;* secondly, I shall view it as *the summary of Christian testimony;* and after that, I shall regard it as *the groundwork of Christian encouragement.*

I. First of all, we have before us here, THE ABSTRACT OF CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE: Some will demur to this. If you should bring some Christians up and say, "Come, now, just tell us in a few words what you think of the Christian life;" they would begin with a deep-fetched groan, and then with the slightest possible allusion to mercy they would pass on to describe their continual exercises of soul, their deep afflictions, their desperate adversities, and their tremendous corruptions, and then they would end with another groan. But I think the healthy Christian, if he is asked this question,—"Now, can you possibly give in one short sentence a statement of your Christian experience?" would

come forward joyously, and say, "I will say nothing about myself, but I will speak to the honor of my God, and I am sweetly constrained to affirm, that '*I have known and have believed the love that God hath to me*.'" That would be his abstract of experience, and the very best I am sure that any child of God can present. It *is* true that we have our trials, but it is just as true that we are delivered out of them. It *is* true that we have our corruptions, and mournfully do we know this to be the fact; but it is just as true that we have an all-sufficient Saviour, who overcomes these corruptions, and enables us to tread the dragon beneath our feet. In looking back we dare not say that we have not passed the den of leopards. It would be wrong if we were to deny that we have floundered through the slough of despond, and have crept along the valley of humiliation, but we can say we have been *through* them; we have not remained in them; we have not left our bones bleaching in the burning sun, nor our bodies to be the prey of the lion. Our sorrows have been the heralds of mercies. Our griefs cannot mar the melody of our praise, for we reckon them to be the deep bass notes of our song. The deeper our troubles the louder our thanks to God, who has assuredly led his servants through all and hath preserved us until now. Our past troubles are no disturbers of our happy worship: they do but swell the stream of our grateful affection. We put down all our trials into the account, but still we declare our one uncontradicted avowal, that "we have known and believed the love that God hath to us."

You will observe the distinction which the apostle makes. I may not be able clearly to bring it out, but it struck my mind as being a very beautiful description of the Christian's two-fold experience. Sometimes he *knows* the love that God has to him, and at other times he *believes* it. There is a difference here: I hope I shall be able to make it plain.

1. Sometimes the Christian *knows* the love of God to him. I will mention two or three particular ways in which he knows it.

Sometimes he knows it by *seeing* it. He goes to his house and he finds it stored with plenty—"his bread is given him, and his water is sure." The secret of God is upon his tabernacle, the Almighty is with him, and his children are about him. He washes his steps with butter, and the rocks pour him out rivers of oil.

His root is spread out by the river, and the dew lieth all night upon his branch; his glory is fresh in him, and his bow is renewed in his hand. He is blessed in his going out and in his coming in; he hath the blessings of heaven above, and of "the deep which lieth under." He is like Job; the Lord hath set a hedge about him, and all that he possesseth. Now, truly, he can say, "I know the love of God to me, for I can see it. I can see a gracious providence pouring forth out of the cornucopia of providence an abundance of all that my soul can desire." This, however, might not completely convince him of God's love if it were not that he has also a consciousness that these things are not given him as husks are cast to swine, but they are bestowed on him as love-tokens from a tender God. His ways please the Lord, and therefore he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him. The man at such a time has a joyous spirit; when he reads the Scripture it is one great transparency from beginning to end; when he meditates upon its pages it is like a bracelet set about with the rarest jewels. He goes about his Master's service, and the Lord makes him successful. He sows and he reaps, he ploughs, and the furrows team with plenty; the sower overtakes the reaper, and the reaper overtakes the sower. God gives him many harvests in a year. The work of his hands is established, and his labor of love is accepted. The Lord hath made him exceeding rich, he hath blessed him, and his cup runs over; he hath all that heart can desire. "Now," he says, "I know the goodness of God." This, truly, is very easy work, and yet, easy though it be, we ought not to forget that we have had such seasons, we have had many trials, but, in the desert of our trial, we have had sometimes an oasis like this; we can look back to some sunny spot when we could say, "Surely the arms of love are ound about me both temporally and spiritually." "He hath set ne upon a rock, and established my goings." Then the Christian *knows* the love of God.

Another time in which he knows his Father's love is, when he *sees* it after coming out of affliction. He hath been sore sick, and while he has been on his bed he has been vexed with anxious thoughts concerning those he might leave behind, or even about himself. In the hour of languishing he cried to the Lord for

deliverance; and, at last, he felt the young blood leaping through his veins anew. New health was restored to him, and he trod the green sward again with light, elastic steps, singing, "The Lord hath heard my cry, like Hezekiah, and has lengthened my days. Now I know the love which God hath to me." Or else he has incurred great losses in business. One after another the curtains of his habitation were rent, the cords were cut in twain, and all the tent pins pulled up by the invading enemy; he thought at last that nothing would be left him, "Surely I shall die in poverty," says he, for bankruptcy stares him in the face. But anon the tide is changed, the keel of his ship almost grated on the gravel, but now it begins to float, and boldly he spreads his sails, and gallantly he rides the billows; now can he exclaim, "I know the love that God hath to me." He has brought his servant out of the horrible pit, and out of the miry clay, and hath again appeared to me in mercy and chased away my doubts and fears.

So also has it been with many a man when he has for years been laboring under a heavy trial and at last escapes from it. Look at old Jacob. I believe that all his life long he would would have put in a demurrer against what I have just declared, viz., that this is a summary of Christian experience. He would have said, "No, young man, I tell you it is not; my experience has been one of trouble and trial ever since I left my Father's house." And we could tell him the reason of it too, if he particularly wished to know. But surely, when at last he put his aged arms around the neck of his son Joseph, when at last he saw him ruler over all Egypt, and when his two grandchildren were brought to kneel before him to receive his blessing, the old man might have reversed what he said, and no more have exclaimed, "Few and evil," but "Now I know the ove tnat God hath towards me." As it was, he did end his life with a song, and finished by praising the angel who had blessed him and kept him from all evil. Even Jacob is no exception to the great rule—that the life of God's people is a proof of the text. "We know and believe the love that God hath to us."

There are other ways in which God's children *know* their Father's love. Besides what they see, there is something which

they *feel*. There are times when the father takes his child into his arms, presses him to his bosom, and kisses him with the kisses of his lips. These are the fond expressions to set forth the tender communings which God hath with his children. John could say, "We have known," for he had laid his head on Jesus' bosom. He had been with him in the garden of Gethsemane, he had been with him on the mount of transfiguration, he had been with him, too, when he worked his special miracles, and therefore, from the fact that he had communion with Christ at the supper, and in his sufferings and his miracles, John might say, "We know the love that he hath to us." And have not you and I—let us now speak from personal experience—have not *we* had fellowship with Christ? There have been times when we were not nearer to ourselves than we were to God, when we were as assured that we were having fellowship with him as a man talketh with his friend; as sure, I say, as we were of our own existence. Bitter though we sometimes think that our lives have been, yet have there been periods in them akin to heaven, when we could say, "If this is not glory it is next door to it. If I am not on the other side Jordan, at least my Master is on this side of it. If I have not yet been permitted to walk the golden streets, yet these very streets on earth have been trodden by heavenly footsteps while I have walked with God." Times there have been when a Christian would not have changed his best estate for an angel's wing of fire. He has felt that he was with Christ, and was as certain of it as if he had seen his pierced hands and his feet. Then could he say, "Now I *know* the love that God hath towards me."

And at times, too, there has been another knowledge, not so high, perhaps, as communion, bringing with it less of rapture and ecstacy, but not less of solid consolation: I mean the infallible testimony of the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of God witnessing with our spirit that we are born of God. I am no believer in those dreams and visions with which many persons mar their experience. I do not believe in those tales I hear people tell about hearing a voice, or seeing an angel. Such things happen now and then—*now* and *then*; but when we are overdone with them, we begin to suspect them to be utterly false. But I speak

not as a fanatic or enthusiast, when I testify that there is such a thing as an express revelation made by the Holy Spirit to the individual man. Besides, this written Word of God, which is that on which we rely, as a sure word of testimony, whereunto ye do well to take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place. There is, besides this, I say, another, a distinct, decided, infallible utterance of the Holy Spirit in the soul of man, when he beareth witness with our spirit that we are born of God, and at such times—and I will not stop to explain how it is; for the natural man would not understand me, and the spiritual man knoweth already—at such times the believer says, "Now I *know* the love that God hath to me." If the devil himself in person should meet the believer when he hath this witness, and tell him that God did not love him, he would call him a liar to his face, and say, "The Spirit of God has told me so, and I will believe the Spirit of God, and I will not believe thee, thou liar from the beginning, thou father of lies." Now, this is a very joyous part of the believer's experience, that both by sight and by feeling, and by distinct inward witnessing, he can often say, "I *know* the love that God hath towards me."

2. But times there are of thick darkness, when neither sun nor moon appear for many days; when the tempest rages exceedingly, and two seas meet in dread collision. There are seasons when the Christian, dismasted and dismantled, drifts before the storm a miserable hulk, unable to grasp the rudder or to man the yards. All strength and hope are gone. He looks upward, but he sees no helper; downward, and he beholds nothing but the uttermost depths of despair; around him there is nought but terror, and all about him every thing frowneth dismay. At such a time, noble is the Christian who can say, "Now it may be I do not *know* the love that God hath to me, but I *believe* it. Now I believe it," saith he: "Yes, roll on, ye waves; tell me that ye shall engulph me, but I believe not you. He who hath promised to preserve me—him I believe, and on his love will I rely, even though now I see no proof of it. Now, poor vessel, drift before the storm; and you, ye rocks, roar yonder with your sounding breakers; but I fear not you, for I *believe* the love of God towards me. I cannot be wrecked completely. Driven

before the storm I may be; half a wreck and tempest-tossed I am, but wholly lost I never can be; and now this day, in the teeth of evidence, in opposition to every thing which goes against it, now I *believe* the love which God hath for me."

The first position, that of knowing God's love is the sweetest, but that of believing God's love is the grandest. To feel God's love is very precious, but to believe it when you do not feel it is the noblest. He may be but a little Christian who knows God's love, but he is a great Christian who believes it, when the visible contradicts it, and the invisible withholds its witness. No one so grand as that prophet, who sees the olive wither, the fig-tree blasted, the vines devoured by the caterpillar, the stalls emptied, and the flocks destroyed, who sees famine staring him in the face, and yet rejoices in the Lord. Oh, that is honoring God. Ye that believe him in the sunshine, ye offer him pence; but ye that believe him in the storm ye pay him pounds. No revenue so rich as that which comes from the fat yet seemingly barren land of affliction; God gets no honor greater than that which he receives from the trustful faith, of a cast down but not destroyed believer. Blessed is he who is perplexed but not in despair, persecuted but not forsaken, who is poor, yet, by his faith, maketh many rich; who hath nothing, yet possesseth all things; who cries, "I can do nothing," and yet can add, "I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me."

And now, do not these two states make up a summary of Christian experience? "*We know* and *believe* the love that God hath to us." "Ah," says one, "we have sometimes doubted it." No, I will leave that. You may insert it in your confession, but I will not put it into my song. Confess your doubts, but write them not in this our psalm of praise. I am sure, in looking back, you will say, "Oh how foolish I was ever to doubt a faithful and unchanging God." Bring all your doubts and fears this day; hew them in pieces like Agag before the Lord; let not one escape; take them and hang them up upon a tree till evening, and then take a great stone and set it at the mouth of their sepulchre, that they may rise no more. Oh for grace from this day forward to say, "When I know not my Father's love, I will believe it, and when I have his presence, then will I sing aloud 'I

know that love which he hath towards me.'" This, then, is my first head.

II. The second is,—this text is A SUMMARY OF THE BELIEVER'S TESTIMONY. Every Christian is to be a testifier. Every thing that God has made speaks of him. One speaks of his power, another of his majesty. The rolling sea and the bespangled sky both tell of his power and of his strength. Others tell of his wisdom; some of his goodness. But the saint has a peculiar testimony. He is to be a witness with heart and lips. All the other creatures speak not with words. They may sing as they shine, but they cannot sing vocally. It is the believer's part in the great eternal chorus to lift up voice and heart at once, and as an intelligent, living, loving, learning witness, to testify to God. Now I think I can say, or rather, I will speak for the thousands of Israel gathered here this morning,—*we* can say our testimony to an unbelieving world, and to poor despairing sinners, is just this,—"*we know and have believed the love that God hath towards us.*" This is our testimony, and we desire to tell it every where as long as we live; and, dying, we hope we shall be enabled to repeat it with our last laboring breath. We will say, when life is finished, and eternity begins, "We *have* known and have believed the love that God hath towards us."

Let me enlarge, however, upon this testimony; and in the presence of many who know nothing of God, let me give an outline of the full testimony of every believer.

In the first place, we have known that God's love to us is *undeserved.* This we can tell you with the tears in our eyes.

> "There was nothing in us that could merit esteem,
> Or give the Creator delight.
> 'Twas even so, Father, we ever must sing,
> For so it seemed good in thy sight."

Our astonishment increases every hour when we think of his love to us, for there was nothing in us that could have caused it. Often have we asked ourselves the question:—

> "Why was I made to hear thy voice,
> And enter while there's room;
> When thousands make a wretched choice,
> And rather starve than come?"

and our only answer is—

"'Twas the same love that spread the feast,
That sweetly forced us in;
Else we had still refused to taste,
And perished in our sin."

Ye poor sinners, ye think that there must be something in you before God can love you. Our testimony is, that God hath loved us; we are sure of this, and we do not speak half-heartedly, when we declare that we are equally sure that there never was any thing in us by nature that he could love. We may doubt a great many doctrines, but we cannot doubt this. This is a matter of fact, that in us, that is, in our flesh there dwelleth no good thing. We have known and have believed that the love of God towards us is free, sovereign, undeserved, and springs entirely from the overflowing love of his own heart, and is not caused by any thing in us.

Another thing we can bear testimony to, is this—that the love of God is *unconquerable*. This is my witness, and the witness of all the thousands here to-day. We strove against God's love at first; Jesus knocked at the door, but we would not open to him; he invited, but we would not come; he called, but we would not hearken. We can say with deepest grief we treated our best friend most shamefully. He knocked at our door in the night, with his hair wet with dew and his locks filled with the drops of the night, but we regarded him not. In sloth and pride we still kept the bed of indolence and self-confidence, and we would not rise to let him in. And we can testify, that if his love could have been conquered, we should have conquered it; for we shot out the envenomed shafts of ingratitude, we held up against him perpetually the shield of our hard-heartedness, and if he could have been overcome, if he were not an Almighty Saviour, we should have defeated him, and have been still his enemies. Ye sinners we can affirm that love divine is a love which many waters can not quench, and which the floods can not drown.

We can yet again bear another testimony to God's love. We can say concerning his love that it has never been diminished by all the sins we have ever committed since we believed. We have

been verily guilty, and we blush to say it. We have often revolted, but we have never found him unwilling to forgive. We have gone to him laden with guilt, but we have come away with our burden removed. Oh! if God could ever cast away his people, he would have cast away me. I am sure God never turns his children out of doors, or this had been my lot long ago. I am certain of the doctrine of final perseverance, because I have persevered as long as I have. If God meant to take my name out of he covenant, he has had mighty reasons enough long ere this.

"If ever it should come to pass,
That sheep of Christ should fall away,
My fickle, feeble soul, alas!
Would fall a thousand times a day;
Were not thy love as firm as free,
Thou soon wouldst take it, Lord, from me."

No, we have known, we have believed the love of God to us is not to be cut asunder by our sins, nor diminished by our unworthiness.

And yet another thing we may say. We have known and we have believed the love of God to us to be perfectly *immutable*. We have changed, but he has changed never. We have doubted him, but when we believed not he has remained faithful. We have sometimes been in the greatest depths, but never too low for his long arm to reach. We have sometimes, it is true, run so far from him that we could not see *him* but he could always see us. We have never found an end to his all-sufficiency, or a limit to his omnipotence. We have never found a change in his love,

"Immutable his will,
Though dark may be my grave;
His loving heart is still
Unchangeably the same.
My soul through many changes goes;
His love no variation knows."

We have known this. We have tasted and handled this. We are not to be argued out of it. We are sure it is true. God is immutable. Because he has been immutable to us, so far, "we have known and believed the love that God hath to us."

I will make but one other remark here, and that is, we can bear our willing witness that the love of God to us has been an unfailing support in all our trials. I cannot speak as a gray-headed man of the storms and troubles which many of you have endured; but I have had more joys and more sorrows in the last few years than any man in this place, for my life has been compressed as with a Bramah press—a vast mass of emotion into one year. I have gone to the very bottoms of the mountains, as some of you know, in a night that never can be erased from my memory, a night connected with this place. I have had to pass also through severe suffering and trial from the calumny and scorn of man, with abuse hailed pitilessly on my head. And I have had to pass through severe personal bodily pain. But as far as my witness goes, I can say that he is able to save unto the uttermost and in the last extremity, and he has been a good God to me. Unfaithful I have been; he has forgiven that, and will forgive; but unfaithful to me he never has been; and if I had the choosing of the rest of my life, I would not choose, but let him map my way to the end, as he has done until now, for "surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." As for you, gray-headed men now present, what tales you could tell! You remember the many deliverances you have had under your sharp afflictions. You have seen a wife buried, but you have seen your God living. You have seen your children carried, one after another, to the tomb, but you have been able to say "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, and blessed be his name." You have had your dearest friends sundered from you, but still have said:

> "How can I bereaved be,
> Since I cannot part with thee?"

You have had attacks of Satan, you have had doubts and fears—you have been assailed by men, by earth and by hell, but you can say—

> "When trouble like a gloomy cloud
> Hath gathered thick and thundered loud;
> He near my soul has always stood,
> His loving kindness, O how good."

Your testimony is without a flaw. Not one good thing hath failed of all that the Lord God has promised, he has never left you, never forsaken you. But to this day you can say, glory be unto the name of an unchanging God, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

III. And now the last point is—the practical use of this great truth. It is THE GROUNDWORK OF CHRISTIAN ENCOURAGEMENT Will you just think that I am coming down out of the pulpit now to you? I cannot perform much pastoral visitation in going from house to house, and so let us do it wholesale this morning, and may the Spirit of God make it a reality.

Dear brothers and sisters, there are some of you here to-day who have been very much and very sorely tried, for your path has been through fire and through water. You are servants of God, and in looking back you can say that you have been helped hitherto. Just now your health and your spirits are failing you; you are brought very low indeed. Permit your minister to take hold of your hand, and look you in the face. My dear brother, will you dishonor your God now? You say, "No, God forbid that I should dishonor him." My dear friend, you have now before you a noble opportunity—an opportunity which an angel might well envy you; you have a noble opportunity of honoring God in the fire. I will not speak lightly of your troubles; I will suppose them to be just as great as you say they are. But will you glorify him in them all? Come, you have trusted him many times, will you trust him now? Perhaps Satan has a commission from on high to try you, and sift you in his sieve. He has been before God, and your Lord has said to him, "Hast thou considered my servant Job?" "Ah," says Satan, "he serves thee now, but thou hast set a hedge about him and blessed him, let me but touch him;" and he has come down to you, and has afflicted you in your estate, afflicted you in your family, and at last he has afflicted you in your body. Shall Satan be the conqueror? shall grace give way? O my dear brother, stand up now and say once more, once for all, "I tell thee, Satan, the grace of God is more than a match for thee; he is with me, and in all this I will not utter one word against the Lord my God. He doeth all things well—well, even now, and I do rejoice in him."

The Lord is always pleased with his children when they can stand up for him when circumstances seem to belie him. Here come the witnesses into court. The devil says, "Soul, God has forgotten thee, I will bring in my witness." First he summons your debts—a long bill of losses. "There," says he, "would God suffer you to fall thus, if he loved you?" Then he brings in your children—either their death, or their disobedience, or something worse, and says, "Would the Lord suffer these things to come upon you, if he loved you?" At last he brings in your poor tottering body, and all your doubts and fears, and the hidings of Jehovah's face. "Ah," says the devil, "do you believe that God loves you now?" Oh, it is noble, if you are able to stand forth and say to all these witnesses, "I hear what you have to say, let God be true, and every man and every thing be a liar; I believe none of you. You all say, God does not love me; but he does, and if the witnesses against his love were multiplied a hundredfold, yet still would I say, 'I know whom I have believed.'"

"I know that safe with him remains,
Protected by his power,
What I've committed to his hands,
'Till the decisive hour;"

He will bring me safe to heaven at last, unhurt by the way.

I have but one other use to make of my text. In this large assembly, composed of so great a multitude of men, there are doubtless some who are saying, "I cannot think that God would have mercy on such a sinner as I am." "I cannot conceive," says another one, "though I know my guilt, I cannot conceive that the love of God can blot out such iniquity as mine." Permit me to take your hand, and if mine is not enough I could take you round these galleries, and down here, and I could give you hundreds of hands, and hundreds of lips should speak and say 'Sinner, never think that the love of God can be exceeded or destroyed by your sin, for *I* obtained mercy," and round the gallery the sound would go if this were a gospel chorus—"and I," "and I," "and I," and you might go up to the brother, and say, "What were you?" "I was a drunkard," says one. "I was a swearer, I cursed God," says another. "I loved the pugilistic

ring, and the skittle ground," says another. "I was a whoremonger, an adulterer, and yet God has forgiven me," and O how sweetly would we all sing in chorus, concerning the power of Christ to save, for we have all in our measure felt its might.

Now, my dear friend, I take your hand, and I say, "We have known and have believed the love that God hath to us," and *we* re the very chief of sinners ourselves. Will you honor God by believing that he is able to save you through the blood of Christ, for if the Lord now enables you to honor him in believing, depend upon it, he has begun a good work in you and has set his heart upon you. Sinners, believe that God is love. O trust him who gave his Son to die. He will deny you nothing. If you ask with humble faith, you shall assuredly receive. Our witness is given; reject it not. "We have known, we have believed the love that God hath to us."

SERMON XII.

THE NECESSITY OF THE SPIRIT'S WORK.

"And I will put my Spirit within you."—Ezekiel, xxxvi. 27

The miracles of Christ are remarkable for one fact, namely, that they are none of them unnecessary. The pretended miracles of Mahomet, and of the church of Rome, even if they had been miracles, would have been pieces of folly. Suppose that Saint Denis had walked with his head in his hand after it had been cut off, what practical purpose would have been subserved thereby? He would certainly have been quite as well in his grave, for any practical good he would have conferred on men. The miracles of Christ were never unnecessary. They are not freaks of power; they are displays of power it is true, but they all of them have a practical end. The same thing may be said of the promises of God. We have not one promise in the Scripture which may be regarded as a mere freak of grace. As every miracle was necessary, absolutely necessary, so is every promise that is given in the Word of God. And hence from the text that is before us, may I draw, and I think very conclusively, the argument, that if God in his covenant made with his people has promised to put his Spirit within them, it must be absolutely necessary that this promise should have been made, and it must be absolutely necessary also to our salvation that every one of us should receive the Spirit of God. This shall be the subject of this morning's discourse. I shall not hope to make it very interesting, except to those who are anxiously longing to know the way of salvation.

We start, then, by laying down this proposition—that the

work of the Holy Spirit is absolutely necessary to us, if we would be saved.

1. In endeavoring to prove this, I would first of all make the remark that this is very manifest if we *remember what man is by nature.* Some say that man may of himself attain unto salvation—that if he hear the Word, it is in his power to receive it, to believe it, and to have a saving change worked in him by i To this we reply, you do not know what man is by nature, other wise you would never have ventured upon such an assertion. Holy Scripture tells us that man by nature is *dead* in trespasses and sins. It does not say that he is sick, that he is faint, that he has grown callous, and hardened, and seared, but it says he is absolutely dead. Whatever that term "death" means in connection with the body, that it means in connection with man's soul, viewing it in its relation to spiritual things. When the body is dead it is powerless; it is unable to do any thing for itself; and when the soul of man is dead, in a spiritual sense, it must be, if there is any meaning in the figure, utterly and entirely powerless, and unable to do any thing of itself or for itself. When ye shall see dead men raising themselves from their graves, when ye shall see them unwinding their own sheets, opening their own coffin-lids, and walking down our streets alive and animate, as the result of their own power, then perhaps ye may believe that souls that are dead in sin may turn to God, may recreate their own natures, and may make themselves heirs of heaven, though before they were heirs of wrath. But mark, *not till then.* The drift of the gospel is, that man is dead in sin, and that divine life is God's gift; and you must go contrary to the whole of that drift, before you can suppose a man brought to know and love Christ, apart from the work of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit finds men as destitute of spiritual life as Ezekiel's dry bones; he brings bone to bone, and fits the skeleton together, and then h comes from the four winds and breathes into the slain, and they live, and stand upon their feet, an exceeding great army, and worship God. But apart from that, apart from the vivifying influence of the Spirit of God, men's souls must lie in the valley of dry bones, dead, and dead for ever.

But Scripture does not only tel us that man is dead in sin; it

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tells us something worse than this, namely, that he is utterly and entirely averse to every thing that is good and right. "The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."—Romans, viii. 7. Turn you all Scripture through, and you find continually the will of man described as being contrary to the things of God. What said Christ in that text so often quoted by the Arminian to disprove the very doctrine which it clearly states? What did Christ say to those who imagined that men would come without divine influence? He said, first, "No man can come unto me except the Father which hath sent me draw him;" but he said something more strong—"Ye *will not* come unto me that ye might have life." No man *will* come. Here lies the deadly mischief; not only that he is powerless to do good, but that he is powerful enough to do that which is wrong, and that his will is desperately set against every thing that is right. Go, Arminian, and tell you hearers that they will come if they please, but know that your Redeemer looks you in the face, and tells you that you are uttering a lie. Men will *not* come. They never will come of themselves. You cannot induce them to come; you cannot force them to come by all your thunders, nor can you entice them to come by all your invitations. They *will not* come unto Christ, that they may have life. Until the Spirit draw them, come they neither will, nor can.

Hence, then, from the fact that man's nature is hostile to the divine Spirit, that he hates grace, that he despises the way in which grace is brought to him, that it is contrary to his own proud nature to stoop to receive salvation by the deeds of another—hence it is necessary that the Spirit of God should operate to change the will, to correct the bias of the heart, to set man in a right track, and then give him strength to run in it. Oh! if ye read man and understand him, ye cannot help being sound on the point of the necessity of the Holy Spirit's work. It has been well remarked by a great writer, that he never knew a man who held any great theological error, who did not also hold a doctrine which diminished the depravity of man. The Arminian says man is fallen, it is true, but then he has power of will left, and that will is free; he can raise himself. He diminishes the des

perate character of the fall of man. On the other hand, the Antinomian says, man cannot do any thing, but that he is not at all responsible, and is not bound to do it, it is not his duty to believe, it is not his duty to repent. Thus, you see, he also diminishes the sinfulness of man; and has not right views of the fall. But once get the correct view, that man is utterly fallen, powerless, guilty, defiled, lost, condemned, and you *must* be sound on all points of the great gospel of Jesus Christ. Once believe man to be what the Scripture says he is—once believe his heart to be depraved, his affections perverted, his understanding darkened, his will perverse, and *you must* hold that if such a wretch as that be saved, it must be the work of the Spirit of God, and of the Spirit of God alone.

2. I have another proof ready to hand. Salvation must be the work of the Spirit in us, because *the means used in salvation are of themselves inadequate for the accomplishment of the work.* And what are the means of salvation? Why, first and foremost stands the preaching of the Word of God. More men are brought to Christ by preaching than by any thing else; for it is God's chief and first instrument. This is the sword of the Spirit, quick and powerful, to the dividing asunder of the joints and marrow. "It pleaseth God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." But what is there in preaching, by which souls are saved, that looks as if it would be the means of saving souls? I could point you to divers churches and chapels into which you might step, and say, "Here is a learned minister, indeed, a man who would instruct and enlighten the intellect;" you sit down, and you say, "Well, if God means to work a great work, he will use a learned man like this." But do you know any learned men that are made the means of bringing souls to Christ, to any great degree? Go round your churches, if you please, and look at them, and then answer the question. Do you know any great men—men great in learning and wisdom—who have become spiritual fathers in our Israel? Is it not a fact that stares us in the face, that our fashionable preachers, our eloquent preachers, our learned preachers, are just the most useless men in creation for the winning of souls to Christ. And where are souls born to God? Why, in the house around which the jeer and the scoff

and the sneer of the world have long gathered. Sinners are converted under the man whose eloquence is rough and homely, and who has nothing to commend him to his fellows, who has daily to fall on his knees and confess his own folly, and when the world speaks worst of him, feels that he deserves it all, since he is nothing but an earthen vessel, in which God is pleased to put his heavenly treasure.

I will dare to say it, that in every age of the world the most despised ministry has been the most useful; and I could find you at this day poor Primitive Methodist preachers who can scarce speak correct English, who have been the fathers of more souls, and have brought to Christ more than any one bishop on the bench. Why, the Lord hath been pleased always to make it so, that he will clothe with power the weak and the foolish, but he will not clothe with power those who, if good were done, might be led to ascribe the excellence of the power to their learning, their eloquence, or their position. Like the apostle Paul, it is every minister's business to glory in his infirmities. The world says, "Pshaw! upon your oratory; it is rough, and rude, and eccentric." Yes, 'tis even so, but we are content, for God blesses it. Then so much the better that it has infirmities in it; for now shall it be plainly seen that it is not of man or by man, but the work of God, and of God alone. It is said that once upon a time a man exceedingly curious desired to see the sword with which a mighty hero had fought some desperate battles; casting his eye along the blade, he said, "Well, I don't see much in this sword." "Nay," said the hero, "but you have not examined the arm that wields it." And so when men come to hear a successful minister, they are apt to say, "I do not see any thing in him." No, but you have not examined the eternal arm that reaps its harvest with this sword of the Spirit. If ye had looked at the jaw-bone of the ass in Samson's hand, you would have said, "What! heaps on heaps with this!" No; bring out some polished blade; bring forth the Damascus steel! No; but God would have all the glory, and, therefore, not with the polished steel, but with the jaw-bone must Samson get the victory. So with ministers; God has usually blessed the weakest to do the most good. Well, now, does it not follow from this, that it must be the work of the

Spirit? Because, if there be nothing in the instrument that can lead thereunto, is it not the work of the Spirit when the thing is accomplished? Let me just put it to you. Under the ministry dead souls are quickened, sinners are made to repent, the vilest of sinners are made holy, men who came determined not to believe are compelled to believe. Now, who does this? If you say the ministry does it, then I say farewell to your reason, because ther s nothing in the successful ministry which would tend thereuntc t must be that the Spirit worketh in man through the ministry or else such deeds would never be accomplished. You might as well expect to raise the dead by whispering in their ears, as hope to save souls by preaching to them, if it were not for the agency of the Spirit. Melancthon went out to preach, you know, without the Spirit of the Lord, and he thought he should convert all the people, but he found out at last that old Adam was too strong for young Melancthon, and he had to go back and ask for the help of the Holy Spirit or ever he saw a soul saved. I say, that the fact that the ministry is blessed proves, since there is nothing in the ministry, that salvation must be the work of a higher power.

Other means, however, are made use of to bless men's souls. For instance, the two ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. They are both made a rich means of grace. But let me ask you, is there any thing in baptism that can possibly bless any body? Can immersion in water have the slightest tendency to be blessed to the soul? And then with regard to the eating of bread and the drinking of wine at the Lord's Supper, can it by any means be conceived by any rational man that there is any thing in the mere piece of bread that we eat, or in the wine that we drink? And yet, doubtless, the grace of God does go with both ordinances for the confirming of the faith of those who receive them, and even for the conversion of those who look upon he ceremony. There must be something, then, beyond the outward ceremony; there must, in fact, be the Spirit of God, witnessing through the water, witnessing through the wine, witnessing through the bread, or otherwise none of these things could be means of grace to our souls. They could not edify; they could not help us to commune with Christ; they could not tend to the conviction of sinners, or to the establishment of saints. There

must, then, from these facts, be a higher, unseen, mysterious influence—the influence of the divine Spirit of God.

3. Let me again remind you, in the third place, that the absolute necessity of the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart may be clearly seen from this fact, that *all which has been done by God the Father, and all that has been done by God the Son must be ineffectual to us, unless the Spirit shall reveal these things to our souls.* We believe, in the first place, that God the Father elect his people, from before all worlds he chooses them to himself but let me ask you—what effect does the doctrine of election have upon any man until the Spirit of God enters into him? How do I know whether God has chosen me from before the foundation of the world? How can I possibly know? Can I climb to heaven and read the roll? Is it possible for me to force my way through the thick mists which hide eternity, and open the seven seals of the book, and read my name recorded there? Ah! no; election is a dead letter both in my consciousness and in any effect which it can produce upon me, until the Spirit of God calls me out of darkness into marvellous light. And then, through my calling, I see my election, and, knowing myself to be called of God, I know myself to have been chosen of God from before the foundation of the world. It is a precious thing—that doctrine of election—to a child of God. But what makes it precious? Nothing but the influence of the Spirit. Until the Spirit opens the eye to read, until the Spirit imparts the mystic secret, no heart can know its election. No angel ever revealed to any man that he was chosen of God; but the Spirit doth it. He, by his divine workings, bears an infallible witness with our spirits that we are born of God; and then we are enabled to "read our title clear to mansions in the skies."

Look, again, at the covenant of grace. We know that ther was a covenant made with the Lord Jesus Christ by his Father from before all worlds, and that in this covenant the persons of all his people were given to him, and were secured; but of what use, or of what avail is the covenant to us, until the Holy Spirit brings the blessings of the covenant to us? The covenant is, as it were, a holy tree laden with fruit; if the Spirit doth not shake that tree, and make the fruit fall therefrom, until it comes to the

level of our standing, how can we receive it? Bring hither any sinner and tell him there is a covenant of grace, what is he advantaged thereby? "Ah," says he, "I may not be included in it; my name may not be recorded there; I may not be chosen in Christ;" but let the Spirit of God dwell in his heart, richly by faith and love which is in Christ Jesus, and that man sees the covenant, ordered in all things and sure, and he cries with David, "It is all my salvation and all my desire."

Take, again, the redemption of Christ. We know that Christ did stand in the room, place, and stead of all his people, and that all those who shall appear in heaven will appear there as an act of justice as well as of grace, seeing that Christ was punished in their room and stead, and that it would have been unjust if God punished them, seeing that he had punished Christ for them. We believe that Christ, having paid all their debts, they have a right to their freedom in Christ—that Christ having covered them with his righteousness, they are entitled to eternal life as much as if they had themselves been perfectly holy. But of what avail is this to me, until the Spirit takes of the things of Christ and shows them to me? What is Christ's blood to any of you until you have received the Spirit of grace? You have heard the minister preach about the blood of Christ a thousand times, but you passed by; it was nothing to you that Jesus should die. You know that he did atone for sins that were not his own; but you only regarded it as a tale, perhaps, even an idle tale. But when the Spirit of God led you to the cross, and opened your eyes, and enabled you to see Christ crucified, ah, then there was something in the blood indeed. When his hand dipped the hyssop in the blood, and when it applied that blood to your spirit, then there was a joy and peace in believing, such as you had never known before. But ah, my hearer, Christ's dying is nothing to thee unless thou hast a living Spirit within thee. Christ brings thee no advantage, saving, personal, and lasting, unless the Spirit of God hath baptized thee in the fountain filled with his blood, and washed thee from head to foot therein.

I only mention these few out of the many blessings of the covenant, just to prove that they are, none of them, of any use to us, unless the Holy Spirit gives them to us. There hang the

blessings on the nail—on the nail, Christ Jesus; but we are short of stature; we cannot reach them; the Spirit of God takes them down and gives them to us, and there they are; they are ours. It is like the manna in the skies, far out of mortal reach, but the Spirit of God opens the windows of heaven, brings down the bread, and puts it to our lips, and enables us to eat. Christ's blood and righteousness are like wine stored in the wine-vat; but we cannot get thereat. The Holy Spirit dips our vessel into this precious wine, and then we drink; but without the Spirit we must die and perish just as much, though the Father elect and the Son redeem, as though the Father never had elected, and though the Son had never bought us with his blood. The Spirit is absolutely necessary. Without him neither the works of the Father, nor of the Son, are of any avail to us.

4. This brings us to another point. *The experience of the true Christian is a reality; but it never can be known and felt without the Spirit of God.* For what is the experience of the Christian? Let me just give a brief picture of some of its scenes. There is a person come into this hall this morning—one of the most reputable men in London. He has never committed himself in any outward vice; he has never been dishonest; but he is known as a staunch, upright tradesman. Now, to his astonishment, he is informed that he is a condemned, lost sinner, and just as surely lost as the thief who died for his crimes upon the cross. Do you think that man will believe it? Suppose, however, that he does believe it, simply because he reads it in the Bible, do you think that man will ever be made to feel it? I know you say, "Impossible!" Some of you, even now, perhaps, are saying, "Well, I never should!" Can you imagine that honorable, upright tradesman, saying, "God be merciful to me, a sinner?"—standing side by side with the harlot and the swearer, and feeling in his own heart as if he had been as guilty as they were, and using just the same prayer, and saying, "Lord, save, or I perish." You cannot conceive it, can you? It is contrary to nature that a man who has been so good as he should put himself down among the chief of sinners. Ah! but that will be done before he will be saved; he must feel that before he can enter heaven. Now, I ask, who can bring him to

such a levelling experience as that, but the Spirit of God? I know very well proud nature will not stoop to it. We are all aristocrats in our own righteousness; we do not like to bend down and come among common sinners. If we are brought there, it must be the Spirit of God who casts us to the ground. Why, I know if any one had told me that I should ever cry to God for mercy, and confess that I had been the vilest of the vile I should have laughed in their face; I should have said, "Why have not done any thing particularly wrong; I have not hurt anybody." And yet I know this very day I can take my place upon the lowest form, and if I can get inside heaven I shall feel happy to sit among the chief of sinners, and praise that Almighty love which has saved even me from my sins. Now, what works this humiliation of heart? Grace. It is contrary to nature for an honest and an upright man in the eye of the world to feel himself a lost sinner. It must be the Holy Spirit's work, or else it never will be done. Well, after a man has been brought here, can you conceive that man at last conscience-stricken, and led to believe that his past life deserves the wrath of God? His first thought would be, "Well, now, I will live better than I ever have lived." He would say, "Now, I will try and play the hermit, and pinch myself here and there, and deny myself, and do penance; and in that way, by paying attention to the outward ceremonies of religion, together with a high moral character, I doubt not I shall blot out whatever slurs and stains there have been." Can you suppose that man brought at last to feel that, if ever he gets to heaven, he will have to get there through the righteousness of another? "Through the righteousness of another?" says he, "I don't want to be rewarded for what another man does,—not I. If I go there, I will go there and take my chance; I will go there through what I do myself. Tell me something to do, and I will do it; I will be proud to do it, however humiliating it may be, so that I may at last win the love and esteem of God!" Now, can you conceive such a man as that brought to feel that he can do nothing?—that, good man as he thinks himself, he cannot do any thing whatever to merit God's love and favor; and that, if he goes to heaven, he must go through what Christ did? Just the same as the drunkard must

go there through the merits of Christ, so this moral man must enter into life, having nothing about him but Christ's perfect righteousness, and being washed in the blood of Jesus. We say that this is so contrary to human nature, so diametrically opposed to all the instincts of our poor fallen humanity, that nothing but the Spirit of God can ever bring a man to strip himself of all self-righteousness, and of all creature strength, and compel him to rest and lean simply and wholly upon Jesus Christ the Saviour.

These two experiences would be sufficient to prove the necessity of the Holy Spirit to make a man a Christian. But let me now describe a Christian as he is after his conversion. Trouble comes, storms of trouble, and he looks the tempest in the face and says, "I know that all things work together for my good.' His children die, the partner of his bosom is carried to the grave; he says, "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord." His farm fails, his crop is blighted; his business prospects are clouded, all seem to go, and he is left in poverty: he says, "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flocks shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." You see him next laid upon a sick bed himself, and when he is there, he says, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted, for before I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept thy Word." You see him approaching at last the dark valley of the shadow of death, and you hear him cry, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me, and thou thyself art with me." Now, I ask you, what makes this man calm in the midst of all these varied trials, and personal troubles, if it be not the Spirit of God? O, ye that doubt the influence of the Spirit, produce the like without him, go ye and die as Christians die, and live as they live, and if you can show the same calm resignation, the same quiet joy, and the same firm belief that adverse things shall, nevertheless, work together for good, then we may be, perhaps, at liberty to resign the point,

and not till then. The high and noble experience of a Christian in times of trial and suffering, proves that there must be the operation of the Spirit of God.

But look at the Christian, too, in his joyous moments. He is rich. God has given him all his heart's desire on earth. Look at him: he says, "I do not value these things at all, except as they are the gift of God; I sit loose by them all and, notwithstanding this house and home, and all these comforts, 'I am willing to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.' It is true, I want nothing here on earth; but still I feel that to die would be gain to me, even though I left all these." He holds earth loosely; he does not grasp it with a tight hand, but looks upon it all as dust,—a thing which is to pass away. He takes but little pleasure therein, saying,—

> "I've no abiding city here,
> I seek a city out of sight."

Mark that man; he has plenty of room for pleasures in this world, but he drinks out of a higher cistern. His pleasure springs from things unseen; his happiest moments are when he can shut all these good things out, and when he can come to God as a poor guilty sinner, and come to Christ and enter into fellowship with him, and rise into nearness of access and confidence, and boldly approach to the throne of the heavenly grace. Now, what is it that keeps a man who has all these mercies from setting his heart upon the earth? This is a wonder, indeed, that a man who has gold and silver, and flocks and herds, should not make these his god, but that he should still say,—

> "There's nothing round this spacious earth
> That suits my large desire;
> To boundless joy and solid mirth
> My nobler thoughts aspire."

These are not my treasure; my treasure is in heaven, and in heaven only. What can do this? No mere moral virtue. No doctrine of the Stoic ever brought a man to such a pass as that. No, it must be the work of the Spirit, and the work of the Spirit alone, that can lead a man to live in heaven, while there is a temp

tation to him to live on earth. I do not wonder that a poor man looks forward to heaven; he has nothing to look upon on earth. When there is a thorn in the nest, I do not wonder that the lark flies up, for there is no rest for him below. When you are beaten and chafed by trouble, no wonder you say,—

"Jerusalem! my happy home!
Name ever dear to me;
When shall my labors have an end,
In joy, and peace, and thee?"

But the greatest wonder is, if you line the Christian's nest never so softly, if you give him all the mercies of this life, you still cannot keep him from saying,—

"To Jesus, the crown of my hope,
My soul is in haste to be gone;
Oh bear me, ye cherubim, up,
And waft me away to his throne."

5. And now, last of all, the acts, *the acceptable acts, of the Christian's life, cannot be performed without the Spirit;* and hence, again, the necessity for the Spirit of God. The first act of the Christian's life is repentance. Have you ever tried to repent? If so, if you tried without the Spirit of God, you know that to urge a man to repent without the promise of the Spirit to help him, is to urge him to do an impossibility. A rock might as soon weep, and a desert might as soon blossom, as a sinner repent of his own accord. If God should offer heaven to man, simply upon the terms of repentance of sin, heaven would be as impossible as it is by good works; for a man can no more repent of himself, than he can perfectly keep God's law; for repentance involves the very principle of perfect obedience to the law of God. It seems to me that in repentance there is the whole law solidified and condensed; and if a man can repent of himself then there is no need of a Saviour, he may as well go to heaven up the steep sides of Sinai at once.

Faith is the next act in the divine life. Perhaps you think faith very easy; but if you are ever brought to feel the burden of sin you would not find it quite so light a labor. If you are

ever brought into deep mire, where there is no standing, it is not so easy to put your feet on a rock, when the rock does not seem to be there. I find faith just the easiest thing in the world when there is nothing to believe; but when I have room and exercise for my faith, then I do not find I have so much strength to accomplish it. Talking one day with a countryman, he used this figure: "In the middle of winter I sometimes think how well I could mow; and in early spring I think, oh! how I would like to reap; I feel just ready for it; but when mowing time comes, and when reaping time comes, I find I have not strength to spare." So when you have no troubles, couldn't you mow them down at once? When you have no work to do, couldn't you do it? But when work and trouble come you find how difficult it is. Many Christians are like the stag, who talked to itself, and said, "Why should I run away from the dogs? Look what a fine pair of horns I've got, and look what heels I've got too; I might do these hounds some mischief. Why not let me stand and show them what I can do with my antlers? I can keep off any quantity of dogs." No sooner did the dogs bark, than off the stag went. So with us. "Let sin arise," we say, "we will soon rip it up, and destroy it; let trouble come, we will soon get over it; but when sin and trouble come, we then find what our weakness is. Then we have to cry for the help of the Spirit; and through him we can do all things, though without him we can do nothing at all.

In all the acts of the Christian's life, whether it be the act of consecrating one's self to Christ, or the act of daily prayer, or the act of constant submission, or preaching the gospel, or ministering to the necessities of the poor, or comforting the desponding, in all these the Christian finds his weakness and his powerlessness, unless he is clothed about with the Spirit of God. Why, I have been to see the sick at times, and I have thought how I would like to comfort them; and I could not get a word out that was worth their hearing, or worth my saying; and my soul has been in agony to be the means of comforting the poor, sick, desponding brother; but I could do nothing, and I came out of the chamber, and half wished I had never been to see a sick person in my life: I had so learned my own folly. So has it been full often in

preaching. You get a sermon up, study it, and come and make the greatest mess of it that can possibly be. Then you say, "I wish I had never preached at all." But all this is to show us, that neither in comforting nor in preaching can one do any thing right, unless the Spirit work in us to will and to do of his own good pleasure. Every thing, moreover, that we do without the Spirit is unacceptable to God; and whatever we do under his influence, however we may despise it, is not despised of God, for he never despises his own work, and the Spirit never can look upon what he works in us with any other view than that of complacency and delight. If the Spirit helps me to groan, then God must accept the groaner. If thou couldst pray the best prayer in the world, without the Spirit, God would have nothing to do with it; but if thy prayer be broken, and lame, and limping, if the Spirit made it, God will look upon it, and say, as he did upon the works of creation, "It is very good;" and he will accept it.

And now let me conclude by asking this question. My hearer, then have you the Spirit of God in you? You have some religion, most of you, I dare say. Well, of what kind is it? Is it a home-made article? Did you make yourself what you are? Then, if so, you are a lost man up this to moment. If, my hearer, you have gone no further than you have walked yourself, you are not on the road to heaven yet; you have got your face turned the wrong way; but if you have received something which neither flesh nor blood could reveal to you, if you have been led to do the very thing which you once hated, and to love that thing which you once despised, and to despise that on which your heart and your pride were once set, then, soul, if this be the Spirit's work, rejoice; for where he hath begun the good work he will carry it on. And you may know whether it is the Spirit's work by this. Have you been led to Christ, and away from self? Have you been led away from all feelings, from all doings, from all willings, from all prayings, as the ground of your trust and your hope, and have you been brought nakedly to rely upon the finished work of Christ? If so, this is more than human nature ever taught any man; this is a height to which human nature never climbed. The Spirit of God has done that, and he will never leave what he has once begun, but thou shalt go from

strength to strength, and thou shalt stand among the blood-washed throng, at last complete in Christ, and accepted in the be loved. But if you have not the Spirit of Christ, you are none of his. May the Spirit lead you to your chamber now to weep, now to repent, and now to look to Christ, and may you now have a divine life implanted, which neither time nor eternity shall be able to destroy. God, hear this prayer, and send us away with a blessing, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

SERMON XIII.

LITTLE SINS.

"Is it not a little one?"—GENESIS, xix. 20.

THESE words we shall take for a *motto*, rather than a *text*, in the ordinary acceptation of that term. I shall not this morning attempt to explain the connection. It was the utterance of Lot, when he pleaded for the salvation of Zoar; but I shall take it altogether away from the connection in which it stands, and make use of it in another fashion. The great Father of Lies hath multitudes of devices by which he seeks to ruin the souls of men. He uses false weights and false balances in order to deceive them. Sometimes he uses false times, declaring at one hour that it is too early to seek the Lord, and at another that it is now too late. And he uses false quantities, for he will declare that great sins are but little, and as for what he confesses to be little sins, he makes them afterwards to be nothing at all—mere peccadilloes, almost worthy of forgiveness in themselves. Many souls, I doubt not, have been caught in this trap, and, being snared thereby, have been destroyed. They have ventured into sin, where they thought the stream was shallow, and, fatally deceived by its depth, they have been swept away by the strength of the current, to that cataract which is the ruin of such vast multitudes of the souls of men.

It shall be my business this morning to answer this temptation, and try to put a sword in your hands, wherewith to resist the enemy when he shall come upon you with this cry:—"Is it not a little one?" and tempt you into sin because he leads you to imagine that there is but very little harm in it. **"Is it not a little one?"**

With regard, then, to this temptation of Satan concerning the littleness of sin, I would make this first answer, *the best of men have always been afraid of little sins.* The holy martyrs of God have been ready to endure the most terrible torments, rather than step so much as one inch aside from the road of truth and righteousness. Witness Daniel: when the king's decree went forth that no man should worship God for such and such a time, nevertheless he prayed three times a day as aforetime, with his window open towards Jerusalem, not fearing the king's commandment. Why could he not have retired into an inner chamber? Why might he not have ceased from vocal prayer, and have kept his petitions in his thought and in his heart? Would he not have been as well accepted as when he kneeled as usual, with the window open, so that all the world might see him? Ah! but Daniel judged that little as the offence might seem, he would rather suffer death at the jaws of the lion, than he would by that little offence provoke the anger of his God, or lead men to blaspheme his holy name, because his servant had been afraid to obey. Mark, too, the three holy children. They were asked by king Nebuchadnezzar, simply to bend the knee, and worship the golden image which he had set up. How slight the homage! One bend of the knee, and all is done. One prostration, and they may go their way safely. Not so. They will not worship the golden image which the king has set up. They can burn for God, but they cannot turn from God. They can suffer, but they will not sin; and though all the world might have excused them with the plea of expediency, if they had performed that one little act of idol worship, yet they will not do it, but would rather be exposed to the fury of a furnace, seven times heated, than commit an offence against the Most High. So also among the early Christians. You may have read of that noble warrior for Christ, Martin Arethusa, the bishop. He had led the people to pull down the idol temple in the city over which he presided; and when the apostate emperor Julian came to power, he commanded the people to rebuild the temple. They were bound to obey on pain of death. But Arethusa all the while lifted up his voice against the evil they were doing, until the wrath of the king fell upon him of a sudden. He was, however, offered his life on condition that he would

subscribe so much as a single halfpenny towards the building of the temple; nay, less than that, if he would cast one grain of incense into the censer of the false god, he might escape. But he would not do it. He feared God, and he would not do the most tiny little sin to save his life. They therefore exposed his body, and gave him up to the children to prick him with knives; then they smeared him with honey, and he was exposed to wasps, and stung to death. But all the while the grain of incense he would not give. He could give his body to wasps, and die in the most terrible pains, but he could not, he would not, he dared not sin against God. A noble example!

Now, brethren, if men have been able to perceive so much of sin in little transgressions, that they would bear inconceivable tortures rather than commit them, must there not be something dreadful after all in the thing of which Satan says, "Is it not a little one?" Men, with their eyes well opened by divine grace, have seen a whole hell slumbering in the most minute sin. Gifted with a microscopic power, their eyes have seen a world of iniquity hidden in a single act, or thought, or imagination of sin; and hence they have avoided it with horror,—have passed by and would have nought to do with it. But if the straight road to heaven be through flames, through floods, through death itself, they had sooner go through all these torments than turn one inch aside to tread an easy and an erroneous path. I say this should help us when Satan tempts us to commit little sins,—this should help us to the answer, "No, Satan, if God's people think it great, they know better than thou dost. Thou art a deceiver; they are true. I must shun all sin, even though thou sayest it is but little." It may be further answered, in reply to this temptation of Satan with regard to little sins, thus:—"Little sins lead to great ones. Satan! thou biddest me commit a small iniquity. I know thee whom thou art, thou unholy one! Thou desirest me to put in the thin end of the wedge. Thou knowest when that is once inserted thou canst drive it home, and split my soul in twain Nay, stand back! Little though the temptation be, I dread thee for thy little temptation leads to something greater, and thy sin all sin makes way for something worse."

We all see in nature how easily we may prove this,—*that little*

things lead to greater things. If it be desired to bridge a gulf, it is often the custom to shoot an arrow, and cross it with a line almost as thin as a film. That line passes over, and a string is drawn after it, and after that some small rope, and after that a cable, and after that the swinging suspension bridge, that makes a way for thousands. So it is oft-times with Satan. It is but a thought that he would shoot across the mind. That thought shall carry a desire; that desire a look; that look a touch; that touch a deed; that deed a habit; and that habit something worse, until the man, from little beginnings, shall be swamped and drowned in iniquity. Little things, we say, lead on to something worse. And thus it has always been. A spark is dropped by some unwary traveller amidst the dry grass of the prairie. It is but a spark; "Is it not a little one?" A child's foot may tread it out; one drop from the rain-cloud may quench it. But, ah! what sets the prairie in a blaze? what bids the rolling waves of flame drive before them all the beasts of the field? what is it that consumes the forest, locking it in its fiery arms? what is it that burns down the habitation of man, or robs the reaper of his harvest? It is this solitary spark,—the one spark—the breeder of the flames. So it is with little sins. Keep them back, oh Satan! They be sparks, but the very fire of hell is only a growth from them. The spark is the mother of conflagration, and, though it be a little one, I can have nought to do with it. Satan always begins with us as he did with Achan. He showed Achan, first of all, a goodly Babylonish garment, and a wedge of gold. Achan looked at it: was it not a little thing to do,—to look? Achan touched it: was not that a little thing? How slight a sin—to touch the forbidden thing: He takes it, and carries it away to his tent, and—here is worse—he hides it. And at length he must die for the awful crime. Oh! take heed of those small beginnings of sin. Beginnings of sin are like the letting out of water: first, there is an ooze; then a drip; then a slender stream; then a vein of water; and then, at last, a flood; and a rampart is swept before it, a continent is drowned. Take heed of small beginnings, for they lead to worse. There was never a man yet that came to the gallows but confessed that he began with small thefts;—the stealing of a book at school—the

pilfering, afterwards, from his master's till, leading to the joining of the gang of robbers;—the joining of the gang of robbers leading to worse crimes, and, at last, the deed was done, the murder was committed, which brought him to an ignominious death. Little sins often act as burglars do;—burglars sometimes take with them a little child; they put the little child into a window that is too small for them to enter, and then he goes and opens the door to let in the thieves. So do little sins act. They are but little ones, but they creep in, and they open the door for great ones. A traitor inside the camp may be but a dwarf, and may go and open the gates of the city and let in a whole army. Dread sin; though it be never so small, dread it. You cannot see all that is in it. It is the mother of ten thousand mischiefs. The mother of mischief, they say, is as small as a midge's egg; and certainly, the smallest sin has ten thousand mischiefs sleeping within its bowels.

St. Augustine gives a picture of how far men will go when they once begin to sin. There was a man who in argument declared that the devil made flies; "Well," said the man with whom he was arguing, "if the devil made flies, then it is but little more to say the devil made worms!" "Well," said the other, "I believe it." "Well," said the man, "If the devil made worms, how do you know but what he made small birds?" "Well," said the other, "it is likely he did!" "Well," resumed the man with whom he was arguing, "but if he made small birds, why may he not have made big ones? And if he made big birds, why may he not have made man? And if he made man, why may he have not made the world?" "You see," says St. Augustine, "by one admission, by once permitting the devil to be thought the creator of a fly, the man came to believe that the devil was the Creator." Just get one small error into your minds, get one small evil into your thoughts, commit on small act of sin in your life, permit these things to be dandled, and fondled, favored, petted, and treated with respect, and you cannot tell whereunto they may grow. They are small in their infancy: they will be giants when they come to their full growth. Thou little knowest how near thy soul may be to destruction, when thou wantonly indulgest in the smallest act of sin!

Another argument may be used to respond to this temptation of the devil. He says, "Is it not a little one?" "Yes," we reply, "*But little sins multiply very fast.*" Like all other little things, there is a marvellous power of multiplication in little sins. As for murder, it is a masterly sin; but we do not often hear of it compared with the multitude of minor sins. The smaller the guilt, the more frequent it becomes. The elephant hath but a small progeny, and multiplieth slowly. But the aphis hath thousands springing from it within an hour. It is even so with little sins: they multiply rapidly, beyond all thought—one becomes the mother of multitudes. And, mark this, little sins are as mighty for mischief in their multitude as if they were greater sins. Have you ever read the story of the locusts when they sweep through a land? I was reading but yesterday of a missionary who called all the people together when he heard that the locusts were coming up the valley; and, kindling huge fires, they hoped to drive off the living stream. The locusts were but small; but it seemed as if the whole of the blazing fires were quenched—they marched over the dead and burning bodies of their comrades, and on they went, one living stream. Before them every thing was green, like the garden of Eden; behind them every thing was dry and desert. The vines were barked, the trees had lost every leaf, and stretched their naked arms to the sky, as if winter had rent away their foliage. There was not then so much as a single blade of grass, or sprig upon the tree, that even a goat might have eaten. The locusts had done all this, and left utter devastation in their track. Why this? The locust is but a little thing! Ay, but in their number how mighty they become! Dread, then, a little sin, for it will be sure to multiply. It is not one, it is many of these little sins. The plague of lice, or the plague of flies in Egypt, was perhaps the most terrible that the Egyptians ever felt. Take care of those little insect sins which may be your destruction. Surely if you are led to feel them, and to groan under them, and to pray to God for deliverance from them, it may be said that in your conversation is the finger of God. But let these sins alone, let them increase and multiply, and your misery is near at hand. Listen no', then, to the evil voice of Satan when he cries, "Is it not a little one?"

Years ago there was not a single thistle in the whole of Australia. Some Scotchman who very much admired thistles—rather more than I do—thought it was a pity that a great island like Australia should be without that marvellous and glorious symbol of his great nation. He, therefore, collected a packet of thistle-seeds, and sent it over to one of his friends in Australia. Well, when it was landed, the officers might have said, "Oh, let it in; 'is it not a little one?' Here is but a handful of thistle-down, oh, let it come in; it will be but sown in a garden—the Scotch will grow it in their gardens; they think it a fine flower, no doubt,—let them have it, it is but meant for their amusement." Ah, yes, it was but a little one; but now whole districts of country are covered with it, and it has become the farmer's pest and plague. It was a little one; but, all the worse for that, it multiplied and grew. If it had been a great evil, all men would have set to work to crush it. This little evil is not to be eradicated, and of that country it may be said till doomsday,—"Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth." Happy would it have been if the ship that brought that seed had been wrecked. No boon is it to those of our countrymen there on the other side of the earth, but a vast curse. Take heed of the thistle-seed; little sins are like it. Take care they are not admitted into your heart. Endeavor to shun them as soon as Satan presents them. Go, seek by the grace of God and his Holy Spirit to keep them away; for if not, these little sins will multiply so fast, that they will be your ruin and destruction.

Once again; little sins, after all, if you look at them in another aspect, are great. *A little sin involves a great principle.* Suppose that to-morrow the Austrians should send a body of men into Sardinia. If they only send a dozen it would be equal to a declaration of war. It may be said, "Is it not a little one? very small band of soldiers that we have sent?" "Yes," it would be replied, "but it is the principle of the thing. You cannot be allowed with impunity to send your soldiers across the border. War must be proclaimed, because you have violated the frontier, and invaded the land." It is not necessary to send a hundred thousand troops into a country to break a treaty. It is true the breach of the treaty may appear to be small; but if

the slightest breach be allowed, the principle is gone. There is very much more in principle than men imagine.

In a sin against God, it is not so much the thing itself as the principle of the thing at which God looks; and the principle of obedience is as much broken, as much dishonored by a little sin as by a great sin. O man! the Creator hath made thee to obey im. Thou breakest his law; thou sayest it is but a little breach. Still it is a breach. The law is broken. Thou art disobedient. His wrath abideth on thee. The principle of obedience is compromised in thy smallest transgression, and, therefore, is it great. Besides, I don't know whether the things Christian men call *little sins* are not, after all, greater than what they call *great sins*, in some respects. If you have a friend, and he does you a displeasure for the sake of ten thousand pounds, you say, "Well, he had a very great temptation. It is true he has committed a great fault, but still he has wronged me to some purpose." But suppose your friend should vex and grieve your mind for the sake of a farthing; what would you think of that? "This is wanton," you would say, "This man has done it out of sheer malevolence toward me." Now, if Adam had been denied by his Maker the whole of Paradise, and had been put into a stony desert, I do not think that, had he taken all Paradise to himself, there would have been more sin in that act, than when placed in the midst of the garden, he simply stole one fruit from the forbidden tree. The transgression involved a great principle, because he did it wantonly. He had so little to gain, he had so much to lose when he dishonored God. It has been said, that to sin without temptation is to sin like the devil, for the devil was not tempted when he sinned; and to sin with but little temptation is to sin like the devil. When there is great temptation offered, I do not say there 's any excuse, but when there is none, where the deed is but little, bringing but little pleasure, and involving but a small consequence, there is a wantonness about the sin which makes it greater in moral obliquity, than many other iniquities that men commit. Ay, you cry out against a great felon, when he is discovered; see of how much he robbed men; see how he wronged the widow and robbed the fatherless! I know it. God forbid that I should make any excuse for him; but that man had a name to maintain. He

had thousands of temptations before him to get immensely rich. He thought he never should be discovered. He had a family to keep. He had got involved in expensive habits, and there are many things to be said for his extenuation. But you, if you indulge in some slight sin which brings you no pleasure, which involves no important interests, by which you have nothing to get, I say you sin wantonly. You have committed an act which has in it the very virus and bitterness of wilful, obstinate, designing disobedience, because there is not even the extenuation, or excuse, or apology, that you should gain something thereby. Little sins are, after all, tremendous sins, viewed in the light of God's law. Looked upon as involving a breach of that inviolable standard of right, and considered as having been committed wantonly, I say they are great, and I know not that those sins men conceive to be gross and great, are greater and grosser in reality than these.

Thus I have given you several arguments with which to answer that temptation, "Is it not a little one?"

Now I am about to speak to the child of God only, and I say to him, "Brother, if Satan tempts thee to say, 'Is it not a little one?'" reply to him, "Ah, Satan, but little though it be, it may mar my fellowship with Christ. Sin cannot destroy, but it will annoy; it cannot ruin my soul, but it will soon ruin my peace. Thou sayest it is a little one, Satan, but my Saviour had to die for it, or otherwise I should have been shut out from heaven. 'That little one' may be like a little thorn in my flesh, to prick my heart, and wound my soul. I cannot, I dare not indulge in this little sin, for I have been greatly forgiven, and I must greatly love. A little sin in others would be a great sin for me—'How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God.'"

Is it a little one, Satan? But a little stone in the shoe will make a traveller limp. A little thorn may breed a fester. A little cloud may hide the sun. A cloud of the size of a man' hand may bring a deluge of rain. Avaunt Satan! I can have nought to do with thee; for since I know that Jesus bled for little sins, I cannot wound his heart by indulging in them afresh. A little sin, Satan! Hath not my Master said, "Take us the foxes, *the little* foxes that spoil the vines, for our vines have tender grapes." Lo! these little things do mischief to my tender heart.

These little sins burrow in my soul, and soon make it to become a very den and hole of the wild beasts that Jesus hates, soon drive him away from my spirit so that he will hold no comfortable fellowship and communion with me. A great sin cannot destroy a Christian, but a little sin can make him miserable. Jesus will not walk with his people unless they drive out every known sin. He says, "If ye keep my commandments ye shal abide in my love, even as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love." There are very many Christians in the world that do not see their Saviour's face by the month together, and seem to be quite content without his company. I understand you not, nor do I wish to know how it is, that you can reconcile your souls to the absence of your Lord. A loving wife, without her husband for months and years, seems to me to be sorely tried. Surely it must be an affliction for a tender child to be separated from his father. We know that in our childhood it was always so, and we looked forward to our return home with joy. And art thou a child of God, yet happy without seeing thy Father's face? What! thou the spouse of Christ, and yet content without his company! Surely, surely, surely, thou hast fallen into a sad state. Thou must have gone astray, if such be thy experience, for the true chaste spouse of Christ mourns like a dove without her mate, when he has left her. Ask, then, the question, what has driven Christ from you? He hides his face behind the wall of your sins. That wall may be built up of little pebbles, as easily as of great stones. The sea is made of drops, the rocks are made of grains; and, ah! surely the sea which divides thee from Christ may be filled with the drops of thy little sins; and the rock which is to wreck thy barque, may have been made by daily working of the coral insects of thy little sins. Therefore, take heed thereunto; for if thou wouldst live with Christ, and walk with Christ, and see Christ, and have fellowship with Christ, take heed, I pray thee, of the little foxes that spoil the vines, for our vines have tender grapes.

And now, leaving the child of God thus awhile, I turn myself to address others of you who have some thought with regard to your souls, but who could not yet be ranked among those that fear God with a true hear To you, I know, Satan often offers

this temptation—"is it not a little one?" May God help you to answer him whenever he thus attacks you. "Is it not a little one?" And so, young man, the devil has tempted thee to commit the first petty theft. "Is it not a little one?" And so he has bidden thee, young man, for the first time in thy life to spend the day of rest in foolish pleasure. It was but a little one, he said, and thou hast taken him at his word, and thou hast committed it. It was but a little one, and so you have told a lie. It was but a little one, and you have gone into the assembly of the frivolous and mixed in the society of scorners. It was but a little one, there could not be much hurt in it, it could not do much mischief to your soul. Ah! stop awhile. Dost thou know that a little sin, if wantonly indulged, will prevent thy salvation? "The foundation of God standeth sure; having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his, and let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." Christ will reveal salvation from all his sins to the man who hates all his sins; but if thou keepest one sin to thyself, thou shalt never have mercy at his hands. If thou wilt forsake all thy ways, and turn with full purpose of heart to Christ, the biggest sin thou hast ever committed shall not destroy thy soul; but if a little sin be harbored, thy prayers will be unheard, thy sighs disregarded, and thy earnest cries shall return into thy bosom without a blessing. You have been in prayer lately, you have been seeking Christ, you have been praying with all your might that God would meet with you. Now months have rolled over your head, you are not yet saved, not yet have you received the comfortable assurance of your pardon. Young man, is it not likely that some little known sin is still harbored in your heart? Mark, then, God will never be at one with thee till thou and thy sins are twain. Part with thy sins, or else part with all hope, though thou hide but so much as a grain of sin back from God. He will not, he cannot have any mercy on thee. Come to him just as thou art, but renounce thy sins. Ask him to set thee free from every lust, from every false way, from every evil thing, or else, mark thee, thou shalt never find grace and favor at his hands. The greatest sin in the world, repented of, shall be forgiven, but the least unrepented sin shall sink thy soul lower than the lowest hell. Mark then, again, sin

ner, thou who indulgest in little sins sometimes. These little sins show that thou art yet in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. Rowland Hill tells a curious tale of one of his hearers who sometimes visited the theatre. He was a member of the church. So going to see him, he said, I understand Mr So and so, you are very fond of frequenting the theatre. No, sir he said, that's false. I go now and then just for a great treat, still I don't go because I like it; it is not a habit of mine. Well, said Rowland Hill, suppose some one should say to me, Mr. Hill, I understand you eat carrion, and I should say, No, no, I don't eat carrion. It is true, I now and then have a piece of carrion for a great treat. Why, he would say, you have convicted yourself, it shows that you like it better than most people, because you save it up for a special treat. Other men only take it as common daily food, but you keep it by way of a treat. It shows the deceitfulness of your heart, and manifests that you still love the ways and wages of sin.

Ah, my friends, those men that say little sins have no vice in them whatever, they do but give indications of their own character; they show which way the stream runs. A straw may let you know which way the wind blows, or even a floating feather; and so may some little sin be an indication of the prevailing tendency of the heart. My hearer, if thou lovest sin, though it be but a little one, thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Thou art still a stranger to divine grace. The wrath of God abideth on thee. Thou art a lost soul unless God change thy heart.

And yet, another remark here. Sinner, thou sayest it is but a little one. But dost thou know that God will damn thee for thy little sins? Look angry now, and say the minister is harsh. But wilt thou look angry at thy God in the day when he shalt condemn thee for ever? If there were a good man in a prison today and you did not go to see him, would you think that a great sin? Certainly not, you say, I should not think of doing such a thing. If you saw a man hungry and you did not feed him, would you think that a great sin? No, you say, I should not. Nevertheless, these are the very things for which men are sent to hell. What said the Judge? "I was hungry and ye gave me no meat; thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was sick, and in prison, and ye

visited me not. Forasmuch as ye have not done this unto the least of these, my brethren, ye have not done it unto me." Now, if these things, which we only consider to be little sins, actually send myriads to hell, ought we not to stop and tremble ere we talk lightly of sin, since little sins may be our eternal destroyers. Ah, man, the pit of hell is digged for little sins. An eternity of woe is prepared for what men call little sins. It is not alone the murderer, the drunkard, the whoremonger, that shall be sent to hell. The wicked, it is true, shall be sent there, but the little sinner, with all the nations that forget God, shall have his portion there also. Tremble, therefore, on account of little sins.

When I was a little lad, I one day read at family prayer the chapter in the Revelations concerning the "bottomless pit." Stopping in the midst of it, I said to my grandfather, "Grandfather, what does this mean—'the bottomless pit?'" He said, "Go on, child, go on." So I read that chapter, but I took great care to read it the next morning also. Stopping again, I said, "Bottomless pit, what does this mean?" "Go on," he said, "Go on." Well it came the next morning, and so on for a fortnight; there was nothing to be read by me of a morning but this same chapter, for explained it should be if I read it a month. And I can remember the horror of my mind when he told me what the idea was. There is a deep pit, and the soul is falling down,—oh how fast it is falling! There! the last ray of light at the top has disappeared, and it falls on—on—on, and so it goes on falling—on—on—on—for a thousand years! "Is it not getting near the bottom yet? won't it stop?" No, no; the cry is, on—on—on, "I have been falling a million years; is it not near the bottom yet?" No, you are no nearer the bottom yet: it is the "*bottomless* pit;" it is on—on—on, and so the soul goes on falling, perpetually, into a deeper depth still, falling for ever into the "bottomless pit"—on—on—on, into the pit that has no bottom! Woe without termination, without hope of its coming to a conclusion. The same dreadful idea is contained in these words, "The wrath to come." Mark, hell is always "the wrath to come." If a man has been in hell a thousand years, it is still "to come." As to what you have suffered in the past it is as nothing, in the dread account, for still the wrath is "to come." And when the world

has grown gray with age, and the fires of the sun are quenched in darkness, it is still "the wrath to come." And when other worlds have sprung up, and have turned into their palsied age, it is still "the wrath to come." And when your soul, burnt through and through with anguish, sighs at last to be annihilated, even then this awful thunder shall be heard, "the wrath to come—to come—to come." Oh, what an idea! I know not how to utter t! And yet for little sins, remember, you incur "the wrath to come." Oh, if I am to be damned, I would be damned for something; but to be delivered up to the executioner and sent into "the wrath to come" for little sins which do not even make me famous as a rebel, this is to be damned indeed. Oh that ye would arise, that ye would flee from the wrath to come, that ye would forsake the little sins, and fly to the great cross of Christ to have little sins blotted out, and little offences washed away. For oh—again I warn you—if ye die with little sins unforgiven, with little sins unrepented of, there shall be no little hell; the great wrath of the great king is ever to come, in a pit without a bottom, in a hell the fire of which never shall be quenched, and the worm of which never shall die. Oh, "the wrath to come! the wrath to come!" It is enough to make one's heart ache to think of it. God help you to flee from it. May you escape from it now, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SERMON XIV.

A VISION OF THE LATTER-DAY GLORIES.

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it."—ISAIAH, ii. 2, and MICAH, iv. 1.

THE prophets of God were anciently called seers, for they had a supernatural sight, which could pierce through the gloom of the future and behold things which are not seen as yet, but which God hath ordained for the last times. They frequently described what they saw with spiritual eyes after the form or fashion of something which could be seen by the eye of nature. The vision was so substantial that they could picture it in words, so that we also may behold in open vision the glorious things which they beheld after a supernatural sort. Let us imagine Isaiah as he stood upon Mount Zion. He looked about him, and there were "the mountains that are round about Jerusalem," far outvying it in height, but yielding to Zion in glory. Dearer to his soul than even the snow-capped glories of Lebanon, which glittered afar off, was that little hill of Zion, for there upon its summit stood the temple, the shrine of the living God, the place of his delight, the home of song, the house of sacrifice, the great gathering-place whither the tribes went up—the tribes of the Lord, to serve Jehovah, the God of Abraham. Standing at the gate of that glorious temple, which had been piled by the matchless art of Solomon, he looked into the future and he saw, with tearful eye, the structure burned with fire; he beheld it cast down and the plough driven over its foundations. He saw the people carried away into Babylon, and the nation cast off for a season.

Looking once more through the glass he beheld the temple rising from its ashes, with glory outwardly diminished, but really increased. He saw on till he beheld Messiah himself in the form of a little babe carried into the second temple; he saw him there, and he rejoiced; but ere he had time for gladness his eye glanced onward to the cross; he saw Messiah nailed to the tree; he beheld his back ploughed and mangled with the whip "Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows," said the prophet, and he paused awhile to bemoan the bleeding Prince of the House of David. His eye was now doomed to a long and bitter weeping, for he saw the invading hosts of the Romans setting up the standard of desolation in the city. He saw the holy city burned with fire and utterly destroyed. His spirit was almost melted in him. But once more he flew through time with eagle wing, and scanned futurity with eagle eye; he soared aloft in imagination, and began to sing of the last days—the end of dispensations and of time. He saw Messiah once again on earth. He saw that little hill of Zion rising to the clouds—reaching to heaven itself. He beheld the new Jerusalem descending from above, God dwelling among men, and all the nations flowing to the tabernacle of the Most High God, where they paid him holy worship.

We shall not, to-day, look through all the dim vista of Zion's tribulations. We will leave the avenue of troubles and trials through which the church *has* passed and *is* to pass, and we will come, by faith, to the last days; and may God help us while we indulge in a glorious vision of that which is to be ere long, when "the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it." The prophet saw two things in the vision. He saw *the mountain exalted*, and he beheld *the nations flowing to it.* Now will you use your imagination for a moment; for there is a picture here which I can scarcely compare to any thing, except one of Martin's magnificent paintings in which he throws together such masses of light and shade that the imagination is left at liberty to stretch her wings and fly to the utmost height. In the present instance, you will not be able to outstrip the reality, however high you may

endeavor to soar; for that which is in our text will certainly be greater than that which the preacher can utter, or that which you may be able to conceive.

Transport yourselves for a moment to the foot of Mount Zion. As you stand there you observe that it is but a very little hill. Bashan is far loftier, and Carmel and Sharon outvie it. As for Lebanon, Zion is but a little hillock compared with it. If you think for a moment of the Alps, or of the loftier Andes, or of the yet mightier Himalayas, this Mount Zion seems to be a very little hill, a mere mole-hill, insignificant, despicable, and obscure. Stand there for a moment, until the Spirit of God touches your eye, and you shall see this hill begin to grow. Up it mounts, with the temple on its summit, till it outreaches Tabor. Onward it grows, till Carmel, with its perpetual green, is left behind, and Salmon, with its everlasting snow, sinks before it. Onward still it grows, till the snowy peaks of Lebanon are eclipsed. Still onward mounts the hill, drawing with its mighty roots other mountains and hills into its fabric; and onward it rises, till, piercing the clouds, it reaches above the Alps; and onwards still, till the Himalayas seem to be sucked into its bowels, and the greatest mountains of the earth appear to be but as the roots that strike out from the side of the eternal hill; and there it rises till you can scarcely see the top, as infinitely above all the higher mountains of the world as they are above the valleys. Have you caught the idea, and do you see there afar off upon the lofty top, not everlasting snows, but a pure crystal table-land crowned with a gorgeous city, the metropolis of God, the royal palace of Jesus the King. The sun is eclipsed by the light which shines from the top of this mountain; the moon ceases from her brightness, for there is now no night; but this one hill, lifted up on high, illuminates the atmosphere, and the nations of them that are saved are walking in the light thereof. The hill of Zion hath now outsoared all others, and all the mountains and hills of the earth are become as nothing before her. This is the magnificent picture of the text. I do not know that in all the compass of poetry there is an idea so massive and stupendous as this—a mountain heaving, expanding, swelling, growing, till all the high hills become absorbed, and

that which was but a little rising ground before becomes a hill the top whereof reacheth to the seventh heaven. Now we have here a picture of what the church is to be.

Of old, the church was like Mount Zion, a very little hill. What saw the nations of the earth when they looked upon it?—a humble man with twelve disciples. But that little hill grew and some thousands were baptized in the name of Christ; it grew again and became mighty. The stone cut out of the mountain without hands began to break in pieces kingdoms, and now, at this day, the hill of Zion stands a lofty hill. But still, compared with the colossal systems of idolatry, she is but small. The Hindoo, and the Chinese turn to our religion and say, "It is an infant of yesterday; ours is the religion of ages." The Easterns compare Christianity to some miasma that creeps along the fenny lowlands, but their systems they imagine to be like the Alps, outsoaring the heavens in height. Ah, but we reply to this, "Your mountain crumbles and your hill dissolves, but our hill of Zion has been growing, and, strange to say, it has life within its bowels, and grow on it *shall*, grow on it *must*, till all the systems of idolatry shall become less than nothing before it, till false gods being cast down, mighty systems of idolatry being overthrown, this mountain shall rise above them all, and on, and on, and on, shall this Christian religion grow, until, converting into its mass all the deluded followers of the heresies and idolatries of man, the hill shall reach to heaven, and God in Christ shall be all in all." Such is the destiny of our church, she is to be an all-conquering church, rising above every competitor.

We may more fully explain this in two or three ways. The church will be like a high mountain, for she will be *pre-eminently conspicuous*. I believe that at this period the thoughts of men are more engaged upon the religion of Christ than upon any other. It is true, and there be few that will deny it, that every other system is growing old: gray hairs are scattered here and there, although the followers of these religions know it. As for Mahomet, has he not become now effete with gray old age? And the sabre, once so sharp to slay the unbeliever, hath it not been blunted with time and rusted into its scabbard? As for the old idolatries, the religion of Confucius, or of Budha, where are

their missionaries, where the old activity that made minor idolatries bow before them? They are now content to be confined within their own limit, they feel that their hour is come, that they can grow no further, for their strong man is declining into old age. But the Christian religion has become more conspicuous now than ever it was. In every part of the world, all people are thinking of it; the very gates of Japan—once fast closed—are now open to it, and soon shall the trumpet voice of the gospel be heard there, and the name of Jesus the Son of the Highest shall there be proclaimed by the lips of his chosen servants. The hill is already growing, and, mark you, it is to grow higher yet; it is to be so conspicuous, that in every hamlet of the world the name of Christ shall be known and feared. There shall not be a Bedouin in his tent, there shall not be a Hottentot in his kraal, there shall not be a Laplander in the midst of his eternal snow, or an African in that great continent of thirst, that shall not have heard of Christ. Rising higher, and higher, and higher, from north to south, from east to west, this mountain shall be beheld; not like the star of the north which cannot be seen in the south, nor like the "cross" of the south, which must give way before the "bear" of the north—this mountain, strange to say it, contrary to nature, shall be visible from every land. Far-off islands of the sea shall behold it, and they that are near shall worship at the foot thereof. It shall be pre-eminently conspicuous in clear, cloudless radiance, gladdening the people of the earth. This I think is one meaning of the text, when the prophet declares "that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills."

This, however, is but a small part of the meaning. He means that the church of Christ shall become *awful and venerable in her grandeur*. It has never been my privilege to be able to leave this country for any time, to stand at the foot of the loftier mountains of Europe, but even the little hills of Scotland, where half way up the mist is slumbering, struck me with some degree of awe. These are some of God's old works, high and lofty, talking to the stars, lifting up their heads above the clouds as though they were ambassadors from earth ordained to speak to God in silence far aloft. But poets tell us—and travellers, who

have but little poetry, say the same—that, standing at the foot of some of the stupendous mountains of Europe, and of Asia, the soul is subdued with the grandeur of the scene. There, upon the father of mountains, lie the eternal snows glittering in the sunlight, and the spirit wonders to see such mighty things as these such massive ramparts garrisoned with storms. We seem to be but as insects crawling at their base, while they appear to stand like cherubims before the throne of God, sometimes covering their face with clouds of mist, or at other times lifting up their white heads, and singing their silent and eternal hymn before the throne of the Most High. There is something awfully grand in a mountain, but how much more so in such a mountain as is described in our text, which is to be exalted above all hills, and above all the highest mountains of the earth.

The church is to be awful in her grandeur. Ah! now she is despised; the infidel barketh at her, it is all he can do; the followers of old superstitions as yet pay her but little veneration. The religion of Christ, albeit that it has to us all the veneration of eternity about it—"For his goings forth were of old, even from everlasting"—yet to men who know him not, Christianity seems to be but a young upstart, audaciously contending with hoary-headed systems of religion. Ay, but the day shall come when men shall bow before the name of Christ, when the cross shall command universal homage, when the name of Jesus shall stay the wandering Arab and make him prostrate his knee at the hour of prayer, when the voice of the minister of Christ shall be as mighty as that of a king, when the bishops of Christ's church shall be as princes in our midst, and when the sons and daughters of Zion shall be every man of them a prince, and every daughter a queen. The hour cometh, yea, and now draweth nigh, when the mountain of the Lord's house in her awful grandeur hall be established on the top of the mountains.

There is yet, however, a deeper and larger meaning. It is just this:—that the day is coming when the church of God shall have *absolute supremacy*. The church of Christ now has to fight for her existence. She hath many foes, and mighty ones too, who would snatch the chaplet from her brow, blunt her sword, and stain her banners in the dust; but the day shall come when all

her enemies shall die; there shall not be a dog to move his tongue against her; she shall be so mighty that there shall be nought left to compete with her. As for Rome, you shall seek but find it not. It shall be hurled like a millstone in the flood. As for Mahomet's lustful superstition, they shall ask for it, but the impostor shall not be found. As for false gods, talk to the bittern and the owl, to the mole, and to the bat, and they shall tell you where they shall be discovered. The church of Christ at that time shall not have kings of the earth to bind her, and to control her, as if she were but a puny thing, nor shall she have them to persecute her and lift up their iron arm to crush her; but she, then, shall be the queen and empress of all nations; she shall reign over all kings; they shall bow down and lick the dust of her feet; her golden sandals shall tread upon their necks; she, with her sceptre, with her rod of iron, shall break empires in pieces like earthen vessels. She shall say, "Overturn! overturn! overturn! until he come, whose right it is; and I will give it HIM." The destiny of the church is universal monarchy. What Alexander fought for, what Cæsar died to obtain, what Napoleon wasted all his life to achieve, that Christ shall have:—the universal monarchy of the broad acres of the earth. "The sea is his, and he made it, and his hands formed the dry land." The whole earth shall come, and worship, and bow down, and kneel before the Lord our Maker; for every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

You have now, I think, the meaning of the text,—the church growing and rising up till she becomes conspicuous, venerable, and supreme. And now let me pause here a moment, to ask how this is to be done.

How is this to be done? I reply, there are three things which will ensure the growth of the church. The first is the individual exertion of every Christian. I do not think that all the exertions of the church of Christ will ever be able to reach the climax of our text. I think we shall see something more than natural agency, even though employed by the Spirit, before the church of Christ shall be exalted to that supremacy of which I have spoken; but, nevertheless, this is to contribute to it. In the

olden times, when men raised cairns to the memory of departed kings, it was usual to put a heap of stones over the tomb, and every passer-by threw another stone. In course of ages those mounds grew into small hills. Now the church of Christ in the present day is growing something in that way. Each Christian convert to Christ throws his stone; we each do our measure. By the grace of God let us each make sure of one stone being deposited, and strive to add another by laboring to be the instruments of bringing some one else to Christ; in this way the church will grow; and as year after year rolls on, each Christian serving his Master, the church will increase; and it shall come to pass in the last times, that even by the efforts of Christ's people, owned by God the Holy Spirit, this mountain shall be highly exalted in the midst of the hills.

This, however, although all that we can do, is not, I think, all that we have to expect. We can *do* no more, but we may *expect* more. Besides, the church of Christ differs from all other mountains in this:—that she has within her a living influence. The ancients fabled that under Mount Etna Vulcan was buried. Some great giant, they thought, lay there entombed; and when he rolled over and over, the earth began to tremble, and the mountains shook, and fire poured forth. We believe not the fable; but the church of God, verily, is like this living mountain. Christ seems to be buried within her; and when he moves himself his church rises with him. Once he was prostrate in the garden; then Zion was but a little hill; then he rose, and day by day as he is lifted up his church rises with him; and in the day when he shall stand on Mount Zion, then shall his church be elevated to her utmost height. The fact is, that the church, though a mountain, is a volcano—not one that spouts fire, but that hath fire within her; and this inward fire of living truth, and living grace, makes her bulge out, expands her side, and lifts her crest, and onwards she must tower, for truth is mighty, and it must prevail—grace is mighty, and must conquer—Christ is mighty, and he must be King of kings. Thus you see that there is something more than the individual exertions of the church; there is a something within her that must make her expand and grow, till she overtops the highest mountains.

But mark you, the great hope of the church, although it is reckoned madness by some to say it, is the second advent of Christ. When he shall come, then shall the mountain of the Lord's house be exalted above the hills. We know not when Jesus may come. All the prophets of modern times have only been prophets from the fact that they have made profit by their speculations; but, with the solitary exception of that pun upon the word, I believe they have not the slightest claim upon your credit; no' even men who are doctors of divinity, who can spoil an abundance of paper with their prophecies of second adventism; "Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of God." Christ may come this morning; while I am addressing you Christ may suddenly appear in the clouds of heaven; he may not come for many a weary age; but come he must; in the last days he must appear; and when Christ shall come he will make short work of that which is so long a labor to his church. His appearance will immediately convert the Jews. They have looked for Messias a king; there he is, in more than regal splendor. They shall see him; they shall believe on him; he will then tell them that he is the Messiah whom their fathers crucified. Then will they look on him whom they have pierced, and they will mourn for their sin, and gathering round their great Messiah, in glorious march, they shall enter and be settled in their own land. They shall once more become a great and mighty nation, nay, a Jew shall become a very prince among men, first born in the church of God. Then shall the fulness of the Gentiles be converted, and all kindreds and people shall serve the Son of David. Mark, the church is to rise first, and when the church has risen to eminence and greatness, the nations will flow unto her. Her rising will not be owing to the nations, but to the advent of Christ, and after she has become great, conspicuous, and supreme, then will the nations flow to her. I am looking for the advent of Christ; it is this that cheers me in the battle of life—the battle and cause of Christ. I look for Christ to come, somewhat as John Bunyan described the battle of Captain Credence with Diabolus. The inhabitants of the town of Mansoul fought hard to protect their city from the prince of darkness, and at last a pitch battle was

fought outside the walls. The captains and the brave men of arms fought all day till their swords were knitted to their hands with blood; many and many a weary hour did they seek to drive back the Diabolians. The battle seemed to waver in the balance; sometimes victory was on the side of faith, and anon, triumph seemed to hover over the crest of the prince of hell; but, just as the sun was setting, trumpets were heard in the distance; Prince Emanuel was coming, with trumpets sounding, and with banners flying; and while the men of Mansoul passed onwards, sword in hand, Emanuel attacked their foes in the rear, and, getting the enemy between them twain, they went on, driving their enemies at the sword's point, till at last, trampling over their dead bodies, they met, and hand to hand the victorious church saluted its victorious Lord. Even so must it be. We must fight on day by day and hour by hour; and when we think the battle is almost decided against us, we shall hear the trump of the archangel, and the voice of God, and he shall come, the Prince of the kings of the earth: at his name with terror they shall melt, and like snow driven before the wind from the bare side of Salmon shall they fly away; and we, the church militant, trampling over them, shall salute our Lord, shouting, "Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth." Thus then, have I explained the first part of the text.

II. The second part of the text we have to consider is this sentence—"AND ALL NATIONS SHALL FLOW UNTO IT." Here is a figure, perhaps not so sublime, but quite as beautiful as the first. Still endeavor to retain in your minds the picture of this stupendous mountain, reaching above the clouds, seen by all mankind, in either hemisphere, a wonder of nature which could not be accomplished by the ordinary rules of art, but which divine wisdom will be able to perform. Well, wonder of wonders, you see all the nations of the earth converging to this great mountain as to a common centre. Once in the year all the people of Israel were wont to go to the little hill of Zion; and now, once for all, you see, not Israel, but all the nations of the earth coming to this great hill of Zion, to worship the Most High God. The white sails are on the Atlantic, and the ships are flying before the wind, even as the bird flitteth through the sky. What bear

they? What is their noble cargo? Lo! they come from far, bringing the sons and daughters of Zion from the ends of the earth. See you there the camel and the dromedary, the great caravan passing over the pathless desert? What are these, and what is their costly freight? Lo! they are bringing the daughters of God, and the sons of Zion up to the Most High God, to worship him. From all parts of the earth you see them coming —from the freezing cold and from the burning heat, from the far off islands of the sea, and from the barren sands they come. they come, all converging towards the great centre of their high and holy worship. This we are not to understand, of course, literally, but as a figure of the great spiritual fact that all the souls of men shall tend to Christ, and to union with his church.

Again, I beg you carefully to observe the figure. It does not say they shall come to it, but they shall "*flow* unto it." Understand this metaphor. It implies first their number. *Now*, when our churches are increased, converts drop into the churches; drop after drop the pool is filled. But in those days they shall flow into it; *now* it is but the pouring out of water from the bucket; then it shall be as the rolling of the cataract from the hillside, it shall flow into it. Now our converts, however numerous, are comparatively few, but then a nation shall be born in a day. The people shall renounce their gods at once. Whole nations shall of a sudden, by an irresistible impulse, flow into the church, not one by one, but in one vast mass. The power of God shall be seen in bringing whole nations into the church of God. You have seen the river flowing onward to the sea, with its banks all swollen, bearing its enormous contribution to the boundless ocean. So shall it be in the last days; each nation shall be like a river, rolling towards the foot of this great mountain the church of the living God. Happy, happy, happy day, when India and China, with their teeming myriads, and all the nations of the earth, with their multitude of tongues, shall flow into the mountain of God!

But the text conveys the idea not only of numbers, but of—(I know the exact word, but then I do not like to use it, for fear some should not know the meaning of it, it means that the nations of the earth shall come willingly to it)—*spontaniety*. That

was the word I wanted to use; but wherefore should we use big words, when we might find little ones. They are to come willingly to Christ; not to be driven, not to be pumped up, not to be forced to it, but to be brought up by the word of the Lord, to pay him willing homage; they are to flow to it. Just as the river naturally flows down hill by no other force than that which is its nature, so shall the grace of God be so mightily given to the sons of men, that no acts of parliament, no state churches no armies will be used to make a forced conversion. "The nations shall flow unto it." Of themselves, made willing in the day of God's power, they shall flow to it. Whenever the church of God is increased by unwilling converts it loses strength; whenever men join the church because of oppression, which would drive them to make a profession of religion, they do not flow, the church is weakened, and not strengthened; but in those days the converts shall be voluntarily won—shall come in willingly by divine grace; they shall flow unto it.

But yet again, this represents the *power* of the work of conversion. They "shall flow to it." Imagine an idiot endeavoring to stop the river Thames. He gets for himself a boat, and there he stands, endeavoring to push back the stream. He objects to it flowing towards the sea, and with his hands he tries to put it back. Would you not soon hear laughter along the banks? Ah, fool, to attempt to stop the stream! Now, the word "flow," here conveys just the idea. "The nations shall flow unto it." The Secularist may rise up and say, "Oh, why be converted to this fanatical religion? Look to the things of time." The false priests may rouse themselves with all their anger to defy Christ, and endeavor to keep their slaves; but all their attempts to stop conversion will be like an idiot seeking to drive back a a mighty stream with his puny hands. "All nations shall flow unto it." What an idea it is! Oh, take your stand to-day, like prophets of the Lord, and look into the future. To-day the church appears like the dry bed of a torrent; here I stand, and I see a little water flowing in a secret and thread-like stream, amongst the stones. So little is it that I can scarcely detect it; but I take the glass of prophecy, I look far onward, and I see a rolling mass of water, such as is sometimes seen in the rapid

rivers of Africa; and there it is, coming with thundering sound. Wait for a few more years, and that torrent, like Kishon's mighty river, sweeping all before it, shall fill this dry bed, and swell on, and on, and on, with tumultuous waves of joy, till it meets the ocean of Christ's universal reign, and loses itself in God. Here you see, then, you have more than your imagination can grasp. This stupendous mountain, and all the nations of the earth—vast numbers with immense force—spontaneously coming up to the house of the living God.

Now, I shall close by a practical address, very brief, and, I trust, very earnest. Is it not a great subject for praise that the nations of the earth *may flow* to the hill of God and to his house? If I were to tell you that all the nations of Europe were climbing the sides of the Alps, you would ask me, "And what benefit do they gain thereby? They must pass over the slippery fields of ice and they may lose their lives in the midst of the bottomless chasms that are overhung by the mighty precipices; they may suddenly be overwhelmed and buried in the all-destroying avalanche, and should they reach the summit they must fall down exhausted. What is there there that men should covet in those barren heights; rarefied air and cold would soon destroy them should they attempt to exist there." Ah, but it is not so with God's hill. There shall be no snow upon its summit, but the warmth and light of Jehovah's love; there shall be no chasms in its side wherein souls may be destroyed, for there shall be a way, and a highway, (the unclean shall not pass over it,) a way so easy that the wayfaring man shall not err therein.

The mountains of which we read in Scripture were some of them such, that if they were accessible no one would desire to climb them. There were bounds set round about Sinai, but, had there been no bounds, who would have wished to ascend it? A mountain that burned with fire, and upon which there was a sound as of a trumpet waxing exceeding loud and long. No brethren, we are not come to a mountain like Sinai with its supernatural thunders; we are not come to a hill bare, and barren, and bleak, and difficult to climb, like the mountains of earth; but the hill of God, though it is a high hill, is a hill up which, on hands and knees, the humble penitent may readily ascend. Ye

are come to a mountain which is not forbidden to you; there are no bounds set about it to keep you off, but you are freely bidden and freely invited to come to it. And the God who invited you will give you grace to come. If he has given you the will to come, he will give you grace to climb the sides of the hill, till you shall reach its upper glories, and stand on its summit transported with delight. While I am talking about the nations that will flow to Christ, might we not weep to think that there are so many in this congregation that are not flowing to Christ but are going *from* him? Ah! soul; what are the splendors of the Millennium to thee, if thou art his enemy? For when he tramples his foes in his hot displeasure, thy blood shall stain his garments, even as the garments of the wine-pressers are stained with the blood of the grape. Tremble, sinner, for the advent of Christ must be thy destruction though it shall be the church's joy and comfort. Ye say, "Come quickly." Know ye not that to you the day of the Lord is darkness and not light, for that day burneth as an oven, and they that are proud and do wickedly shall be as stubble, and the fire shall consume them with burning heat. Oh! ye people that to-day hear the words of Jesus! ye are now this day invited to come to the mountain of his church, on which stands his cross and his throne. Ye weary, heavy laden, sin-destroyed, sin-ruined souls, ye that know and feel your need of Jesus, ye that weep because of sin, ye are bidden to come now to Christ's cross, to look to him who shed his blood for the ungodly, and, looking to him, you shall find peace and rest; so that when he cometh with rainbow wreath, and robes of storm, you shall be able to see him, not with alarm and terror, but with joy and gladness; for you shall say, "Here he is, the man who died for me has come to claim me; he who bought me has come to receive me; my judge is my Redeemer, and I will rejoice in him." Oh! turn ye, turn ye unto God! some of you as vile as the inhabitants of Sodom; turn ye, turn ye to God! O Lord Jesus! by thy grace turn every one of us to thyself! Bring in thine elect; let thy redeemed rejoice in thee; and then let the fulness of the nations flow unto thee, and thine shall be the glory, for ever and ever.

SERMON XV.

COVENANT BLESSINGS.

"He hath given meat unto them that fear him: he will ever be mindful of his covenant."—PSALM cxi. 5.

THIS verse occurs in one of the Psalms, the Hallelujah, commencing with "Praise ye the Lord." We often find the Psalmist praising and extolling God. Let us imitate his example. Let us do so, because we shall find it very pleasant and profitable, and because, also, it is our bounden duty. One of the highest exercises of the new life is praising God. Our doubts and fears may sometimes be indications of life; and doubtless they are, for the dead man neither doubteth nor feareth. But our songs of praise are far higher demonstrations of the life within, and are more worthy fruits of a soil which has been the subject of God's husbandry, which has been ploughed by the agonies of the Saviour, and made fertile through his precious blood. My brethren, our life should be one continued psalm, with here and there a note which descends deep. Yet, for the most part, we should always seek to sing as we live. The stars sing as they shine, and they sing by shining. Let us sing whilst we live, and live by singing; and let our life be singing one great psalm of life perpetually. There are many ways of praising God. We should do it with the lip; and grateful is the voice of song in the ears of the Lord God of Sabaoth. We should do it by our daily conversation; let our acts be acts of praise, as well as our words words of praise. We should do it even by the very look of our eyes, and by the appearance of our countenance; let not thy face be sad, let thy countenance be joyous. Sing where thou

goest; yea, when thou art laden with trouble, let not man see it. Thou, when thou fastest, appear not unto man to fast; anoint thy head and wash thy face that man may not perceive thy sorrows. Be thou ever glad, for it is God's commandment—"Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say, Rejoice." And yet once more, he saith, "Rejoice evermore." That we may have themes of song, David has in this psalm afforded us many subjects. Let us attend to the subjects of the text—the subject, I might have said, for it is all one. This verse is the voice of experience. It is not the voice of hope, saying, "He *will* give;" but the voice of experience, "He *hath* given meat unto them that fear him;" and the voice of faith, "He will ever be mindful of his covenant."

We shall notice, first of all, the gift—"He hath given meat unto them that fear him;" then we shall notice the covenant; then the character here spoken of—"He hath given meat unto them that fear him."

I. Let us consider THE GIFT—"He hath given meat." We are to understand this, of course, in a twofold sense of our necessities; the first, temporal, the other, spiritual.

1. We are to understand this gift in a *temporal* sense. Our bodies need meat; we cannot keep this fabric in repair without continually providing it with food. God's children are not, by their being spiritual men, prevented from feeling natural wants; they hunger and they thirst even as do others. Sometimes, too, they are even called to suffer poverty, and know not where their next morsel of meat shall come from. Blessed be God,

> "He who has made our heaven secure
> Will here all good provide."

And the covenant is not merely the covenant of the great and marvellous things that we need spiritually, but it is a covenant which promises in the catalogue of its gifts mercies that are food for the body, mercies for our immediate and pressing wants—"He hath given meat unto them that fear him." God has never suffered his people to starve. "The young lions do lack and suffer hunger, but they that wait upon the Lord shall not want any

good thing." The promise is as true under the new covenant as under the old—"Bread shall be given you, and your water shall be sure." The Lord who feeds the ravens will not be less careful of his people; he who supplies every insect with its food, and feeds the prowling lion in his majesty, will not suffer his own home-borne ones, those who are nearest his heart, to perish for lack of nutriment. "The cattle on a thousand hills are his;" he will not suffer his children to lack for their meat. "He it is to whom the earth belongeth, and the fulness thereof;" he will not, then, suffer his children to go without necessary supplies. "He hath given meat unto them that fear him." Some of us are not qualified to speak from experience upon this point. We may say, indeed, that God has ever given us our meat; we have not lacked any thing. Hitherto, the road has been to us like that of Israel when they came to the camp of the Syrians, strewn with gold, and silver, and garments. God has provided for our wants even before they have come; he has anticipated our necessities. But there are others of you that have been brought so low by poverty and affliction that you are qualified to speak. You have sometimes been to an empty cupboard with an empty stomach; you have sometimes wondered where your supplies should come from; you have been even houseless and homeless. But, ah, children of the living God, has he ever failed you utterly? Has he not, after all, though he has reduced you very low, so that the last morsel was eaten from the wallet, has he not ultimately supplied you, and that, too, by means not miraculous, but almost so? Has he not in providence sent you things which you needed, and which you scarcely expected to receive? In answer to prayer has he not heard you in your deepest tribulations? And when you were well nigh famished, has he not spread your board with plenty when you have bent your knees before him? Yes, ye tried ones, ye have tried this promise and have proved it true. Ye sons of poverty and toil, ye have had to rest the whole weight of your daily maintenance on the promise, without any thing to look to save that; and have you ever found him fail? No; you will unanimously bear witness that this is a great truth—"He hath given meat unto them that fear him."

But it is surprising, sometimes, how God has done it. Many

a story have I heard from the poor amongst my own flock of how God has delivered them—strange stories, which you would laugh at. There are some of them that could write "Banks of Faith" that would be as wonderful as that of William Huntington. Some of you laugh at that, and do not believe it; but it is only because there are so many things of the same sort all put together that they seem to be incredible through their number. But there are many of the Lord's servants who could easily compose a "Bank of Faith" like his, for they have had their necessities most deep and their sorrows most poignant, and they have had their reliefs well nigh miraculous, so that if God had thrust his hand out of the clouds and handed down bread for them and clothing, their deliverance would not have been more apparently from his hand than it has been in the way whereby his providence has supplied their wants. They can say He hath done it, and hath done it marvellously, and constantly too—"He hath given meat to them that fear him." Why, if the child of God were in such a position that the earth could not yield him bread, God would open the windows of heaven and rain manna from thence again. If he could be placed in such a position that the common course of providence could not serve his end, God would change the nature of every thing rather than change the standing of a promise; he would break all the seasons, and unloose the very bonds of nature itself, and let the laws of nature run riot, rather than suffer one of his promises to fail, and his children to lack. "He hath given meat," and he will ever do so, "unto them that fear him."

2. But we are to understand this chiefly in a *spiritual sense.* God's people are a people to need spiritual meat. I was talking to a minister the other day, who certainly was not noted for his great soundness. He was making a joke to me about certain people in his congregation, who said they could not feed under him. "There is Mrs. So-and-so," says he, "who tells me that she cannot get a bit of food out of my ministry. I do not know ow it is," continued he, jocularly, "for I do not think you say half as many good things as I do; but yet the old woman cannot feed well enough." He laughed at the idea of feeding under a ministry. But there is a good deal more in the expression than

many think; there is a good deal meant by it that cannot be expressed by any other word. It is only the Christian that can understand it. He hears a very eloquent discourse delivered; "but," says he, "I have got no food out of it—I like the eloquence." Or he hears a very learned discourse; "but," he says, "I do not feed under that." There is a peculiar style of preaching, and a peculiar style of hearing, which can only be described as a "feeding preaching," and a "feeding hearing;" for the child of God feels that though he may have learned little that is fresh, yet still his soul has been receiving spiritual food, and he goes on his way rejoicing. And, my brethren, the ministry is one of the places where God feeds his people; and those to whom God has committed the solemn work of the ministry should be very careful that there is something in what they say that the child of God can feed on. What on earth is the use of a man going into a pulpit and firing away for an hour and a half with thundering eloquence, but with nothing to feed upon? I have read sermons lately—can get them by hundreds—that are, from beginning to end, the unmitigated and undiluted essence of nothing; grand de-descriptions of nonentity, flowery and beautiful delineations of things that cannot exist. You read of comets of which it is said that a thousand square miles of their tails might be compressed into one solid inch. Many of these sermons are of the same sort, consisting of a long display of words; but as for any thing tangible to lay hold of and to remember, there is nothing of the sort in them. They are a finely, gloriously polished nothing. You can discover no matter in them; very finely dished up, but containing nothing whereon my soul could feed. The child of God can never feed under a ministry unless he hears the doctrines of grace, and listens to the things of the kingdom. "Our minister preached a fine metaphysical sermon the other day," say one; "I never heard such a clear distinction as he made between that point and the other point." But the child of God goes out and says, "Well, I don't want any of his metaphysics; there was no food for my soul. I went there to hear about the Lord Jesus Christ; I went to hear something about my soul's welfare; something about the heaven that is to come, or the hell that is to be shunned; I wanted to hear something about communion

with Christ, something about the eternal covenant." Sermons need to be instructive; there should be a teaching in them of the things of the kingdom. "Why," said a good writer once, "if you were to hear six lectures by a geologist, he would be the poorest geologist in the world who would not give you some opinions of geology. But you may hear sixty sermons from many preachers without getting any notion of their system o divinity." It is the glory of the men of the age that they hav not systems of divinity; they have cast creeds to the wind; they have no forms of stating their truths systematically. The reason is because they have nothing to state. No man will avoid having a system when he has got principles. It is impossible for a man to believe the things in God's Word without insensibly to himself forming a creed of some sort or other. It is the fashion to talk about giving up creeds. Creeds are only the orderly way of laying out things. If we have the things we shall always have the way of laying them out in some fashion, and communicating our knowledge to others. So that in a given number of discourses our hearers will be pretty tolerably acquainted with our ideas of the truth of God. "He giveth meat to them that fear him" under the ministry. Sometimes God gives your minister a gift of such utterance that if he were to preach for a week you would listen to him. There are periods when your own minister gives no food to you, though he does to others, because he has food for different members of God's family. But there are other periods when God seems to have given him such gifts, when he has let fall handfuls to be gathered, as did the man Boaz, scattering sheaves of corn from both his hands, and you pick them up and feast thereon and are satisfied.

There is another way in which God gives food unto his children—that is, in the Bible. This precious volume is the grand granary of spiritual food for God's people. Would to God y read it more! With your magazines, and newspapers, and tracts in this, that, and the other, ye have too much covered up this ancient Bible, this old Book, this emporium of all wisdom, this sum of all knowledge. Aye, Christians, if you want meat, study a chapter of God's Word. If you want to have food for your souls, give up for a little while reading the works of even

the best of men, and take a psalm for your study—or if not a whole psalm, take one verse of it; take it for your daily meditation; masticate and digest it all day long, and so you will find meat for "them that fear him." Let me just say a word to you on this point. When you read the Bible, do not think you will get meat simply by reading. I know some people who make a point of reading two chapters of the Bible in a day. They do so as a manual exercise; they simply run their eyes down the page, and, after all, do not know a word they have been reading. I have heard many a time in our churches and chapels, a minister read a very long chapter, that none of his hearers knew any thing about, nor himself either; and if he had read a chapter in double Dutch the people would have been just as much fed. That is not the way to feed upon God's Word. We cannot feed except we understand and know the thing we read about. In reading the Scripture do as Luther advised. He says, "When I get a promise I treat it as a tree in my garden. I know there is rich fruit on it. If I cannot get it, I shake it backwards and forwards by prayer and meditation, until at last the fruit drops into my hand." Do you the same. Read a short portion of Scripture; turn it over and over again in your meditation all day long. And then, if you cannot get any thing out of it, I will tell you a way whereby you will effectually get something. Go down on your knees before the passage and say, "O Lord, open this passage to me; give me something out of it; teach me to understand it"—and you will not be long before God refreshes you with dainty bits from the tables of paradise, and make your soul glad with choice morsels of royal dainties, wherewith he feeds his own chosen ones. "He giveth meat to them that fear him."

But there is another way of getting meat, even when we have not got the Bible with us. He sometimes gives meat "unto them that fear him," by bringing Jesus Christ home to the man; without the use of the Word; simply in meditation and communion. You know, beloved, after all, that what a child of God feeds upon is Jesus Christ. When the Jews went to the temple they did not eat the tongs and fire-shovels; they did not eat the garments of the priests, and the bells and the pomegranates; they

valued all these things, for they were made of gold, and they thought them precious. But what they ate was the pascal lamb. So the Christian does not eat the doctrine; he feeds on Christ. He loves the truth, he loves the ordinance, he loves every thing in the temple for Christ's sake; but his food is the Lamb himself." Jesus, Jesus, Jesus—that is the real food for all the Lord's chosen. And are these not most sweet and happy moments, when the spirit is carried aloft in blessed communion, when Jesus Christ seems very pleasant and very precious, when we place our head on his bosom, when we seem to feel his heart and know his love for us, when we lose ourselves in him and almost forget that we have a separate existence, being—

> "Plunged in his Godhead's deepest sea,
> And lost in his immensity?"

Yes, there are some such precious seasons; and these are like days of heaven upon earth—the seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. I was much struck the other evening at a prayer-meeting, by the prayer of one of our brethren, which came home to my heart. When he prayed, he said, "O Lord, give me Mary's place—

> 'Oh! that I might, with Mary sit
> For ever at my Master's feet,
> And learn of him.'"

He prayed that he might have her part, and always sit at the feet of Jesus. But, by and by, the good man kindled up in his prayer, and said, "No, my Master, I have not asked enough of thee. Mary's place is too low for me, if I may have a better. Lift me up higher, Lord; give me John's place.

> 'Oh! that I might, with favored John,
> For ever lean my head upon
> The bosom of my Lord.'"

Then again he pleaded for that higher degree of communion between the soul and Christ. "Surely," thought I, "now you have asked enough." But, suddenly rising up to another flight on the wings of communion, like the eagle taking its last soar into the

skies, he said, "No, Lord, John's place doth not suffice me. Thou hast lifted me from thy feet to thy bosom—now from thy bosom to thy lips." Then, quoting the words of the spouse—"Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, for thy love is better than wine"—he sweetly paraphrased it thus, "Let the lip of my petitioning meet the lip of thy benediction; let the lip of my praise meet the lip of thy acceptance; so shall the kiss be consummated and my joy be complete." Aye, and when we are favored to go through these stages of fellowship; to go from the foot to the bosom, from the bosom to the lip; to go from the mere learner, and to be a friend and companion; and then to go higher still—to be lifted up and to feel our fellowship with Christ, by standing as high as he does, and being on his lip; it is there the child of God, insensibly almost, receives strength, and, like Elijah smitten by the angel, he rises up and finds his meat baked upon the coals, and eats thereof, and lives upon it for forty days to come. Precious mode of feeding this!

But, somehow or other, God doth give meat unto his children, and will never leave them to be famished. You have noticed, I dare say, when one means of feeding fails for God's children, the other become better. You are sick, and cannot be fed by a ministry; you cannot go out to hear the Word; then, generally, God's Word becomes more precious. Or, you have nobody to read to you, and your sight has failed; generally, then, communion becomes more precious. One way or other God will have his children fed.

II. We will now consider THE COVENANT. "He will be ever mindful of his covenant."

God has made many covenants at divers times, and none of these covenants has he ever broken. For one moment let me briefly mention the covenants. There was the covenant with Adam, the covenant of works—"Obey me, and thou shalt live; disobey me, and thou shalt die." That covenant he did not break. He did not subject Adam to pain or misery until he had first broken the condition of his covenant, and so became the inevitable heir of suffering. He made a covenant with Noah that the waters should no more go over the earth; and the rainbow, the sign of that covenant, has lit up the sky ever since at various intervals

and the earth has not been drowned with a flood a second time. He made a covenant with David, that his seed should sit upon his throne; and that covenant he kept. He made a covenant with Abraham, that he would give the land of Canaan to be the heritage of his seed for ever; and that covenant hath he kept. Neither hath he altered the thing that went out of his lips.

But the covenant here referred to is a better covenant than all hese. It is the covenant of grace. It is a sweet subject to preach ipon. Suffer me to go back to the time when this covenant was made. It is older than the oldest things that man has ever seen; The covenant of grace is coeval with the everlasting hills. It was made by God with Christ for us from before all worlds. Man was a sinner, God had foreseen that he would sin. Jesus Christ and his Father were determined to save him, a covenant was made between them. God the Son, on his part, stipulated that he would suffer all the punishment of all the elect, that he would offer perfect righteousness on their behalf, and pay all the demands of God's justice. God the Father, on his part, covenanted that all the elect, being redeemed by the blood of Christ, should most certainly be accepted and saved. That is the covenant of which God is ever mindful. Some people believe in a rickety kind of covenant, which I never could find in the Bible, a covenant that has conditions in it which you and I are to fulfil. If there was such a covenant as that, it would not be a covenant of grace but of works. If the covenant of grace were made with men, those that should be saved, on condition of believing, it would be as impossible for any man to be saved on that condition, as it would be on the condition of obeying, since faith is no more possible to unaided man than is perfect obedience. Faith in Christ is as difficult a thing, to a man dead in trespasses and sin, as is perfect obedience to every command of God. The covenant of grace is a covenant without any conditions on our part whatever, of any sort, in any shape, in any form, or any fashion. The covenant, in fact, is not made between us and God; it is made between God and Christ, our representative. All the conditions of that covenant are answered, so that there are none left for us. The conditions were that Christ should suffer—he has suffered; that Christ should obey—he has obeyed. All that is done; and

all that is now standing is the unconditional covenant, that God will give to all his elect, though dead in sin, power to live; that he will give to them, though black, a washing in the fountain; that he will give to them, though naked, a clothing of perfect righteousness; that he will ultimately accept them to dwell with him for ever in glory everlasting. This covenant, on which our hopes are built, this glorious covenant,

> "Signed, and sealed, and ratified,
> In all things ordered well,"

Will God ever forget? No, "he will be ever mindful of his covenant." He will be ever mindful of it, in every thing and towards every person. Christ will be mindful of his covenant in every thing. God will not suffer one single promise to be unfulfilled, nor one single blessing of the covenant to be kept back. Every iota, and jot, and tittle of the covenanted purpose of God shall be fulfilled, and every thing which he has promised to his people in the covenant, and which Christ hath bought for his people through the covenant, shall most infallibly be received by his people. As for the persons interested therein not one of them shall be forgotten. If in the covenant they shall most assuredly be saved, despite every attack of the devil, and of their own wickedness, and any casualty, so called, of providence, or whatsoever may happen, all that are in the covenant must and shall be gathered in. The Arminian says there are some in the covenant who tumble out of it; that God has chosen some men—that he justifies, that he accepts them, then turns them out of his family. The Arminian holds the unnatural, cruel, barbarous idea, that a man may be God's child, and then God may unchild him because he does not behave himself. The idea is revolting even to human sensibility. If our children sin, they are our children still; though chastened and vexed sore, yet never do they cease to be remembered amongst our family. There are many of God's children that have gone astray and been chastened for it; but it were an idea too barbarous to suppose that God would unchild his child for any sin he doth commit. He keepeth fast his covenant; he loveth them, sinners though they be. He keepeth them from running into the riot of sin; and when, some

times, they go astray, as the best of them will, still his loving heart towards them is unchangeably the same. I do not serve the God of the Arminians at all; I have nothing to do with him, and I do not bow down before the Baal they have set up; he is not my God, nor shall he ever be; I fear him not, nor tremble at his presence. A mutable God may be the God for them; he is not the God for me. My Jehovah changeth not. The God that saith to-day and denieth to-morrow, that justifieth to-day and condemns the next, the God that hath children of his own one day and lets them be the children of the devil the next, is no relation to my God in the least degree. He may be the relation of Ashtaroth or Baal, but Jehovah never was or can be his name. Jehovah changeth not; he knoweth no shadow of turning. If he hath set his heart upon a man, he will love him to the end. If he hath chosen him, he hath not chosen him for any merit of his own; therefore he will never cast him away for any demerit of his own. If he hath begotten him unto a lively hope, he will not suffer him to fall away and perish. That were a breaking of every promise, and abrogation of the covenant. If one dear child might fall away, then might all. If one of them for whom the Saviour died might be damned, then might the Saviour's blood be utterly void and vain. If one of those whom he hath called according to his purpose might perish, then were his purpose null and void. But, child of God, lay your head upon the covenant—

> "Let the earth's old pillar shake,
> And all the wheels of nature break,
> Thy steadfast soul need fear no more
> Than solid rocks when billows roar."

Let the covenant be thy song in the house of thy pilgrimage. Let the covenant be thy refuge in distress. Let the covenant be thy watchword at the gates of death. Keep the covenant in mind. Remember again that it is "signed, and sealed, and ratified;" that oaths and blood have made it all secure. When thou doubtest, think not the covenant is shaken. When thou tremblest, think not the covenant is removed. It abideth still, fast and firm. And though thou hast backslidden, go thou back to Jesus—His heart is still the same,

"Thy soul through many changes goes:
His love no variation knows."

He abideth still, fast and firm; nor will he finally leave one of his own people whom he hath foreknown and fore-ordained. And now we close up by noticing—

III. The Character Referred to.—"Them that fear him." Them that fear him are in the covenant. Saith the young convert oftentimes to the minister, "Sir, how can I know that I am elect?" And the usual answer is, "You have nothing to do with that; you may think of that by-and-bye." Begging the gentleman's pardon, that is not true. A sinner has every thing to do with it. Instead of having nothing to do with election, he has every thing in the world to do with it. But it is said he need not trouble his mind about it. Perhaps he should not; but he will, and it is no way of comfort to tell him that he ought not. If I have a toothache, it is poor comfort for a physician to tell me that I ought not to have it. So, when a sinner is troubled about election, it is poor comfort to tell him he ought not to be troubled. The best way is to go fairly through with it. Do you fear the Lord? Then so sure as you are a living man you are elect. You have the fear of the Lord before your eyes? Then you need have no doubt but that your names are in the covenant. None have feared the Lord who were not first loved by the Lord. Never one did come and cast himself at the feet of Jesus because he feared the penalty of sin; and none ever came to embrace the loving skirts of the Redeemer because he feared lest he should go astray, without having been first called and chosen and made faithful. No, the fear of God in the heart is the proof of being God's elect one. If we fear him we may believe that he will ever give meat unto us; that he will always keep his covenant towards us which he has made for us in Christ Jesus our Lord. "But," says one, "how am I to know whether I am elect?" Beloved, thou canst not know it by any outward professions. Thou mayest be of any church in the world, or of no church, and yet be one of God's elect. Nor canst thou know it even by the sentiments which thou receivest as being true, for thou mayest know truth and yet not have truth in thy soul; thou mayest be orthodox in

thy head and heterodox in thy heart; thou mayest believe every thing, and yet be cast away at last. The only way whereby thou canst judge thyself is this: Dost thou fear the Lord? Dost thou reverence his name and his Sabbath? Hast thou trembled at his feet? Hast thou cast away thy self-righteousness at hi command? And hast thou come to him and taken Christ to b thy all in all? I do not ask thee whether thou fearest hell— many fear hell that fear not God. Dost thou fear to offend a loving Father. Dost thou fear lest thou shouldst go astray from God's commandments? Dost thou cry to him,

"Saviour, keep me lest I wander?"

Dost thou ask him to preserve thee? And canst thou honestly say that if thou couldst be perfect thou wouldst be; that thou desirest to be free from sin; that thou hatest every false way? And is it thy daily groaning to be set free from guilt, and to be surrendered to the Crucified?

Lastly, canst thou say this after me,

"A guilty, weak, and helpless worm
On Christ's kind arms I fall;
He is my strength and righteousness,
My Jesus and my all?"

Then you are elect; then you are justified; then you are accepted; and you have no more reason to doubt your acceptance and your election, than you will have when you stand before the throne of God amid the blazing lustres of eternal glory. You are elect; you always were. God hath chosen you; your fearing him is the evidence of it; and your believing in Christ, without any righteousness of your own, is a proof positive that you were chosen of God before the foundation of the word.

Now, what shall I say in conclusion? There are some of you that fear not God. Alas! for you, my brethren, that you should be in a state so utterly miserable and pitiable, without the fear of God before your eyes. Oh that God would help you to fear him! Oh that he would break your hearts! and so would make you feel your ruined state, as to bring you to his feet to receive

the perfect righteousness of Christ; then would you fear him and then might you rejoice that he would give you meat and keep you in his covenant. Methinks I hear one say, "I am a sinner, I am in the front rank of the army of guilt. I have verily transgressed, and gone astray from the Most High. Tell me, did Jesus die for me? Did he die—not as some say he died, for all men—but in that special sense which ensures salvation?" I will answer thee. Canst thou say, "I am a sinner," not as a kind of idle compliment that most men pass when they say they are sinners, and do not mean what the word implies, for they no more mean that they are sinners than that they are horses. But do you really believe that you are sinners deserving God's wrath, and the fire of hell for ever? Then the Lord Jesus died for you; and "this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." If the word is to be understood in the sense in which Hart uses it, when he says,—"A sinner is a sacred thing; the Holy Ghost hath made him so"—if you feel you are a sinner in that sense, Christ died for you. But you say, "I wish he had set my name down in the book, that I might read it." Why, my friend, if he had done so, you would believe it was intended for somebody else. If the book contained the name of Smith, in such a street, Smith would declare that there were so many Smiths that it could not be him; and if you could read your name, you would still doubt that it could by any possibility, be a description of you, since another person might bear the same title. But since it says, "sinners," Satan himself cannot beat you out of that. God has taught you what "sinner" means, and Satan cannot unteach you that. Are you, then, a sinner, fully, wholly, in all the black sense of the word? Then Christ died for you. Cast yourself upon that—Christ died for sinners. But, say you, "Sir, if I were a little better, I might believe that he died for me." I should not; he died for sinners. Or you say, "If I were a saint, I might believe that he died for me." I should not; he died for sinners. Only prove thyself a sinner, and thou hast proved that Christ died for thee; only be thou sure that thou art a sinner, that thou hast revolted, and that thou knowest it, only confess with thine heart thy transgressions,

and take this title to thyself, and thou mayest believe that Jesus died for thee.

Let me give you a lesson in logic—not from Whately nor Watts, but from the logic of faith. It is extraordinary how different are the conclusions of faith from those of reason. Once Reason came along, and heard a man cry, "I am guilty, guilty." She stopped, and said, "The man is guilty; God condemns the guilty, therefore this man will be condemned." She went away —left the man condemned and ruined, and quivering with fear. Faith came and heard the self-same cry, rendered more bitter by the cruel syllogism of Reason. Faith stopped: she said, "The man is guilty; Christ died for the guilty; the man will be saved;" and her logic was right; the man lifted up his head, and rejoiced. Reason came one day, and saw a man naked, and she said, "He hath not on a wedding garment; can naked souls appear before the bar of God? Should they have a place at the supper of the Lamb? The man is naked; he must be cast out, for naked ones cannot enter heaven!" Then Faith came by, and said, "The man is naked; Christ wrought a robe of righteousness; he must have made it for the naked; he would not have made it for those who have a robe of their own. That robe is for the naked man, and he shall stand in it before God." And her logic was right and just. The other might seem strictly according to rule, but this was better still. Reason one day heard a man say that he was very good and righteous. She saw him go up to the temple, and heard him pray, "Lord, I thank thee that I am not as other men." Said Reason, "That man is better than others, and he will be accepted." But she argued wrongly; for, lo! he went out, and a poor sinner by his side, who could only say, "God be merciful to me, a sinner," went down to his house justified, while the proud Pharisee went on his way disregarded. The logic of faith is to argue white from black, whereas the logic of reason argues white from white. Luthur says, "Once upon a time the devil came to me, and said, 'Martin Luther, you are a great sinner, and you will be damned. 'Stop, stop,' said I, 'one thing at a time; I am a great sinner, it is true, though you have no right to tell me of it. I confess it; what next?' 'Therefore you will be damned.' 'That is not good reasoning. It is true

I am a great sinner, but it is written 'Jesus Christ came to save sinners;' therefore I shall be saved. Now go your way.' So I cut the devil off with his own sword, and he went away mourning, because he could not cast me down by calling me a sinner." I have a right to believe Jesus Christ died for me, and I cast myself wholly upon him. Do thou the same, poor disconsolate one, for thou hast nothing of thine own to depend upon: but thou, O great, and good, and rich man, I have naught to say to thee.

"Not the righteous,
Sinners Jesus came to save."

Though thou hast a rag of thine own, thou shalt never have Christ's robe. Go thy way, thy righteousness shall prove like the shirt of Hercules, when it burnt him, and did eat his flesh away; though thou gloriest in it, it shall be the winding-sheet of thy soul for ever. But if thou hast nothing, and art poor and penniless, and miserable, reduced to utter spiritual destitution and poverty, in God's name I preach to thee the Gospel; Christ died for thee, and thou shalt not perish. God will not punish Christ for us, and then punish us afterwards. He will not demand the payment at his hands and then at ours. He is not unjust—to punish first the scapegoat, the surety, the substitute, and then to punish you. Christ was your substitute, he bore your guilt, he carried your iniquities upon his head; your sins were numbered upon him, and your punishment laid upon him. Go your way; you can never be punished. Your sins that are many, are all forgiven. Rejoice in pardon bought with blood; be glad, be satisfied, be happy, even till thou diest, and then thou shalt be happy for ever.

Just one sentence more to Christians desirous of following the way of God's Word, and ever growing in grace. I met the other day with a piece of one of Christmas Evans's sermons—it struck me forcibly, and I determined to repeat it—"The enemy is ever after our souls; let us keep our hearts with all diligence; let us store our hearts with texts of Scripture, in the things given, that we may be kept out of the way." Then he gives this parable—"Once upon a time the devil determined to do a mighty business. Seeking whom he may devour, he went through the land,

determined to devour some souls. He came upon a ploughboy standing there, and he said within himself, 'I will tempt the boy to rob his master; then he will get into prison; t'will bring him into bad company, so that he will get worse, and be transported, and ultimately get to the gallows, and I shall have his soul for ever.' The devil strode across the moor, and, as he approached the ploughboy, he heard him singing—

'My God, the spring of all my joys,
The life of my delights,
The glory of my brightest days,
And comfort of my nights.'

'Ah!' said the devil, 'he won't answer my purpose,' and off he went. There was no room for him there; it was a dry place. So, flying over hill and dale, he came to a quiet nook in a valley between two high mountains, where there was a sweet little cottage overgrown with ivy, with its porch covered with eglantine. There sat beneath the porch a maiden knitting. 'I will entice her,' said he, 'away to the big town, and lead her into ways of folly, and sin, and shame. She shall perish in an infirmary, and her soul will be mine for ever.' He stooped to whisper in her ear some temptation, but he heard her singing—

'Jesus, I love thy charming name,
'Tis music to mine ear;
Fain would I sound it out so loud
That earth and heaven should hear.'

'That won't answer,' said he; and he went his way, saying, 'I should have done better to have been with old Williams all day; I could have tormented the old fellow: I will be off to him now.' So he flew away, and at nightfall alighted in a village. All the lamps were out save one, in a cottage, where he saw the light glimmering in an upper room. It seemed to be a rushlight dying in the socket. 'Here,' said he, 'old Williams lives. He has served God these fifty years, and if I could get him now, what a trophy he would be! it would pay me for all my disappointments if I could get old Williams after all his professions.' He stepped up stairs, and there Williams lay dying. 'Now,'

said he, 'I will make him doubt, and die in despair, and perish!' The crisis was just come; his friends were gathering round his bed, expecting his departure. Satan stepped lightly across the room, to get at the dying man's ear; and as he came close to him, Williams stretched out his hand, and said, 'Yea, though I pass through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil; for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me!' 'Thou hast prepared a table before me in the presence of mine enemies.' Satan shrank back abashed, and went away howling. He did no more that day, and never had he done such a sorry day's work before. He was wholly beaten, entirely overcome, because the minds of the people whom he wished to attack had been pre-occupied, and they were feeding on God's Word."

And now, my brother, go thy way; plead this promise at the throne, and he will give meat to them that fear him. Get your meat, feed upon it all day long, and you may defy all your enemies to lead you astray.

SERMON XVI.

THE DEW OF CHRIST'S YOUTH.

"Thou hast the dew of thy youth."—PSALM CX. 3.

You have walked in the garden early in the morning, and you must have remarked the singular freshness and beauty which a summer's morning always seems to give to the earth; the dew-drops glisten like tears, standing in the eyes of the flowers, as if they wept for joy to see the sun again after the long night of darkness; the greenness of vegetation has about it a more than emerald hue; and every "thing of beauty" looks more beautiful than at any other season. You have gone out, perhaps, at noon, and you have noticed how dry and dusty every thing appears; for the sun has risen, and by his burning heat he has exhaled the dew, and the freshness of the morning has died into the drought of noon. Now, this is just a picture of all things here below! Ay, and a portrait of ourselves. When we begin with things, they have dew upon them, and they sparkle; wait a little while, and all their brightness is gone, and their brilliance scattered. Ye have entered into pleasure, and ye have found it a delusion; ye have intermeddled with all kinds of knowledge, and ye have found that in the making and reading of books there was much pleasure; but ere long ye have discovered, that in reading many books and in making them there was no end, and much study was a weariness of the flesh. Every thing terrestrial has its dew in the morning, but its burning heat at noon; and we too, beloved—I mean those of us who have received the anointing of the Holy Spirit—is not this too much the case with us? When we were first converted, what a sparkling dew there was upon our leaf! We could not sing God's praises loud enough; we could not

sufficiently leap for joy before the ark. All the exultations of those that went before seemed utterly insufficient for us. There was such unction and savor in the Word to us, that we could feast upon it every day—yea, and all night long, and yet never be weary. We ran in the way of our Lord's commandments without weariness, and we mounted aloft as on the wings of eagles and never thought that we could mount too high. But, alas! beloved, is it not the case with many of us, that the early freshness of the morning of our youth is exhausted, and some, at least, of our excellence hath proved to be like the early cloud and the morning dew? Though in some things we trust we have grown, yet we are compelled to confess, that in many others we have diminished; while in depths of self-knowledge we feel we have made progress, yet in the height of joy in Christ, in the sublimities of a full devotion to him, we sometimes fear that we have gone backward, and that we have not the joy of our youth, the dew of the morning. But you will observe, that the text here speaks of Jesus Christ: *he* has the dew of his youth. We are certain it is Christ, for we have the infallible witness of the New Testament, that Jesus Christ is spoken of in this Psalm. See Matt. xxii. 44; Heb. i. 13, and many other places. "The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning." And then, there is added this, which evidently alludes to Jesus Christ: "Thou hast the dew of thy youth."

Having, therefore, set ourselves and all terrestrial matters in contrast, it only remains for me now to enter, as fully as God may help me, into the sweet doctrine of this text—that Jesus Christ ever has, and ever will have, the early dew, freshness, and brilliance of his youth. First, permit me to state the fact; secondly, to show the reasons for it; and, thirdly, to deduce the lessons from it.

I. First of all, let me show THE FACT—CHRIST HAS THE DEW OF HIS YOUTH.

Speak we of Christ *personally;* has he not all the freshness, all the vigor, all the strength of ancient times? His goings forth were of old, even from eternity; and behold he goeth forth every

day in the preaching of his Word, and in the ministrations of his Spirit, in the chariots of salvation still he rideth forth, he walketh still among the golden candlesticks. And have we ever imagined that he has lost the strength of his youth? do his steps falter? has his arm begun to feel the palsying influence of old age? Is there a scar of decrepitude and wasting upon his sublime brow? His head and his hair are white like wool, as white as snow, for he is the Eternal of Ages; yet, saith the spouse, his locks are bushy and black as a raven, for he has the strength of youth, while he has the age of an eternity upon him. Well might he now rise up before us and say of himself personally, "Is mine ear heavy that I cannot hear? Is mine arm shortened that I cannot save? Am I not to-day what I was yesterday? Was I the Creator of the world? did I speak it out of nothingness?—and am I not still its Sustainer? Was I the Redeemer of the Church? did I purchase her with mine own blood?—and do I not still preserve with power those whom I redeemed with blood? Did I not on earth, with cries and groans, offer up my prayer before my Father? and do I not now plead, not with less vigor but with greater strength, when with authority I advocate my people's cause before his throne?"

Brethren, you can enlarge in your private meditations upon this most blessed and excellent truth, that the person of Jesus is an ever young person; he is the holy child Jesus, he is never the old man Jesus; he never was an old man on earth, and he never can be old in the sense of becoming senile or full of decrepitude; he has the dew of his youth upon him; Christ's person is in every thing to-day what it was before the foundation of the world. Nor is this freshness confined to Christ in his person; it is just the same if you take him in *his doctrine*. We have Christ among us not incarnate in flesh, but incarnate in doctrine. The doctrines of grace are in a certain sense the body of Christ. We speak sometimes of a body of Divinity; but if any man would know what the body of Divinity is, it is neither Calvin's "Institutes," nor Dwight's "Theology," nor Gill's "Body of Divinity,"—it is Christ that is *the body* of Divinity. It was the only body Divinity ever did take when it became incarnate; but, taking Divinity in another sense to mean Divine doctrine, Christ, what

Christ said, and what he did, is the only body which Divinity—that is, the Gospel—ever will take. Now, the Gospel is always fresh. There are many subjects, beloved, that are worn thread bare; but who ever heard of the Gospel being exhausted? You have come up to the house of God, some of you, these thirty or forty years. Did you ever feel that you wanted any thing fresh Did you ever say as you went out, when you had heard a Gospel sermon, "I should like to have some improvements made upon it?" If you have gathered the goodly bread-corn of the kingdom, have you not said, "That was the food of my childhood in grace, it is my food now that by reason of years I am able to discern, and it shall be my food all through the wilderness, until I eat of the corn of the kingdom on the other side the Jordan."

It is a wonderful thing, that any man should be able, day after day, and week after week, to attract thousands to hear him talk. I do not believe any man could do it with any other subject except the Gospel. I have the most intense respect for that great man and mighty orator, Mr. Gough; but with all his ability, if he were to deliver a teetotal lecture twice every Sabbath-day, if he were in any pulpit in England, he could not command a congregation for twenty-one years at a stretch; but the Christian minister, with only one subject—Christ crucified—may not only keep on twenty-one years, but if he should live as long as Methuselah, he may still keep on preaching none other Gospel than Jesus Christ, and him crucified, and he would still find that the people of God would come around to hear him, and never crave for a fresh subject. Let any great historian open, if he please, a lecture room, and attempt to deliver two lectures upon history every week, and let him see whether he does not find the congregation which would at first gather around him, fearfully diminished. We have had an instance in London of one who has delivered an amusing lecture a thousand times, always to great multitudes; but then they were different persons every time. No one thought of going to hear him lecture upon the same subject the whole thousand times. It would have become a most intolerable penance even to have heard Albert Smith delivering his lecture upon Mont Blanc, however interesting it might seem, once or twice to some people; it would certainly pall upon the mind if we heard

it many times repeated; but the Christian minister may keep on and on, and on the same good theme—Christ Jesus, Christ Jesus; the same cross, the same crown of thorns, the same bleeding wounds—from the first time that he enters his pulpit to the time when he lays down his charge. He may keep on, and the people may always say, and he shall always feel, that the Gospel has the dew of its youth upon it, and is always fresh and always new.

But I can say yet another thing. This is specially true of this old book, the Bible. Many other valuable books have been written, but, however interesting they may be, read them over half-a-dozen times and you may be quite satisfied you need not read them any more. Next to the Bible, the book that I value most is John Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," and I imagine that I may have read that through perhaps a hundred times. It is a book of which I never seem to tire. But then the secret of that is, that John Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" is the Bible in another shape. It is taken out of this same well of the Gospel—it is a book full of the same heavenly water; but even of that wondrous allegory you would tire at last. You would say, "Well, now I know all this, I want something more. Here is the experience of a Christian; I know this to be true, and I delight in it, but I want to go somewhat further." And the mind would crave for something else. But read the Bible, and, strange to say, the more you read it the more satisfied you will be with it. When you begin to read the Bible, perhaps you want fifty other books to become a thorough Bible student; but your library will diminish gradually, until at last, the more you understand the Bible the fewer books you will want, and you will come to say, "If I might have all my days over again this should be the only book that I would study, and I would concentrate all my powers upon the understanding of this one volume." Other books you can get to the bottom of. You dive into them, and at first they seem to be very deep; but every time you dive they appear to grow shallower and shallower, until at last you can see the bottom at a glance. But in God's Word, every time you dive the depths grow deeper. The first time you read, in your ignorant conceit, you fancy you have got the full meaning of a text;

but you look at it again, and you find that though yo had the meaning in one sense, yet you had not the *full* meaning; and you meditate again and again and again, and you find each time you dive the meaning is still far beyond your reach, and that the Bible is far above your comprehension. It expands, it grows, it increases in interest. There is such a charm about the Bible, that he who reads it little may never perhaps feel the whole of it. It is something like the Maelstrom you have heard of, only in a different and more excellent sense. The Maelstrom is a great whirlpool on the coast of Norway. A ship at a long distance from it will feel a little of its attracting influence, a very little, yet enough to make it veer from its course; but the nearer it floats to the centre the stronger becomes the current, and the more forcibly is the vessel carried along by it, until at last, if the ship should be so unhappy as to near it, it would whirl round at a tremendous rate until it was thoroughly engulphed in its depths. In a higher and better sense the like is true of the Bible. The nearer you go to it, and the more closely you study it, the more rapidly do you revolve in its circles, the more voraciously do you devour its contents, until at last you are swallowed up in its glory, and long for nothing else than to prove the heights and depths of this bliss unfathomable—the love of God revealed to us in Christ, in his sacred Word. Truly, of this book we may say, "Thou hast the dew of thy youth."

Again, I may add, *every thing that has to do* with Christ is always young. The beds of spices where he lieth is always green; the trees planted by him, who is the river of water, have their leaves of such a sort that they never wither, and their fruits always comes to perfection. Every thing lives where he is, for he is life, and in him there is no death at all; and because he is life, therefore is he always full of freshness, and therefore doth he beget living verdure wheresoever he goeth; and this shall we know best when we shall follow him to the living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes.

II. Thus have we done with the first point, and now we take notice of the second. What is the reason for this? WHAT IS THE REASON WHY CHRIST JESUS, AND HIS GOSPEL, AND HIS

WORD, AND ALL THINGS ABOUT HIM ARE ALWAYS SO FRESH? Why have we always an abiding dew upon these holy things?

I answer, first, no man that understands what it is to have Christ in his heart *will ever get tired of him from want of variety.* The reason why we are weary of a thing is because there is a sameness about it. There are many men that have a very weighty speech to deliver—very good matter—but it is a pair to sit and hear them, because they deliver their words in a mon otone, as if they were touching a bell. Word follows word with no difference of tone. Now, the human ear loves variety; it cannot bear monotony. And so it is with the whole of man hood. Nothing monotonous will ever long retain its freshness. However sweet the music may be, if we always heard the same notes we should, most assuredly, be as disgusted with even the sweet music of an archangel if we were compelled to hear it all day and all night long, as we are with the cackling of a goose. Every thing is apt to lose its interest when it is repeated over and over again. But there is no fear of any tautologies in Christ; you may look at Christ a thousand times, and you shall have, if you please, a thousand different aspects. If you choose to turn to one book of the Old Testament you shall see him in a vast variety of aspects. You shall see him as a Paschal Lamb; you shall see him as the scapegoat; you shall see him at one time as the bullock, strong to labor, and then you shall see him as the lamb, patient to endure; you shall behold him as the dove, full of innocence; you shall see him in the blood sprinkled, in the incense burning, in the laver filled with water; you shall see him in Aaron's rod that budded, and in the golden pot that was full of manna; you shall see him *in* the ark; you shall see him *over* the ark: *in* the ark you shall see him having the law within his heart, and *over* the ark you shall see the golden light and the mercy-seat, and say, "Christ is here." In every type you shall see Christ—in so many different shapes, too, that you shall say, "Turn this whichever way I like, there is something fresh." Christ Jesus, if I might compare so glorious a person to so humble a thing, is like the kaleidoscope. As often as you look through the kaleidoscope you see a fresh arrangement of colors and a fresh appearance, so as often as you look at the Lord

Jesus Christ you always discover some new beauty in his position Look at him typically, and when you have done with looking at him typically look at him officially; you have not time to consider all his glories as a priest—you have hardly passed your eyes over his flowing vesture, and his glittering breastplate, and listened to the ringing of the bells, and marked the beauty of the pomegranates, before you see him come forth as a King and you can scarcely stop to look at the many crowns on his head before he comes forth as a Prophet; and you have hardly time to admire him as a Prophet before he comes forth as Mediator, as Shepherd, as Captain of our salvation, as Head of the Church, as the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. And if you go further and look at his person, his person is wonderful. You see him as the child born, the Son given. He comes into this world, and you mark him to be God, and there you are lost in divinity; you mark him to be man, you have not lost your wonder yet, and you still stand astonished when you regard him in that aspect as bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. The reason why every thing else loses its freshness to us is because of its want of variety. You may go to any exhibition that has ever been opened to attract attention and awaken interest, but you will find that after a certain time there is a want of variety in it; but with Christ there never is such a want, and therefore to the mind's eye he always has the dew of his youth.

There is yet another reason: Christ has the dew of his youth because of his *excellence*. To-day, stepping in to see a gentleman, I observed a table which had upon it a great variety of objects. I wondered what they were, and took the liberty of asking him. He told me that he had some beautiful stereoscopic views there which had been taken at an immense expense in Egypt, in the Holy Land, and in all parts of the world; and he showed me one or two Scriptural subjects which very much interested me. They were certainly pre-eminently excellent as works of art. He said, "There, sir, I never get tired of looking at those things. I could look at them constantly, and never get tired of them." "Well," I said, "I quite understand that; they are excellent; for really there is the study of half an hour in this one picture; and then one might begin again, it is so full of

beauty, and it seems so true to the original." But I thought to myself, "Excellent as they are, I think, if I call to see my friend in a year's time he will tell me that he has had to buy a fresh lot of views, for he has been looking at these so often, that he has become altogether tired of them. They would have no freshness to him, because he had seen them so many times. But nark; the reason why he could look at them so often was because they were so excellent. If they had been bad views, if there had not been great skill and great art bestowed upon them, he would soon have become tired of looking at them. There are some views in nature which a man might look at a hundred times, and yet always wonder at them; but the reason is, because they are so beautiful. There are other things which might strike one's eye at first, but which when they are looked into would lose their freshness, because there would be no real ground for admiration, because there was no excellency. But Christ Jesus will always have the dew of his youth, because he is always so excellent. Ah, brethren, you thought Christ was sweet when first you tasted him; but you shall know him to be sweeter still when you shall know more of him, and taste and see that he is good; but you shall never know all his sweetness, for you shall eat, and eat, and eat to the full; and perhaps scarcely in heaven itself shall you know all the sweetness of Christ. You imagine, perhaps, that you know all the excellency of his love to you; but remember, it passeth knowledge. You imagine that you have proved his faithfulness; but you have not proved it as you will prove it. All the tests to which you have ever put the Saviour are but little compared with those that are to come after. You have proved him with the footmen, you will soon prove him with the horsemen; you have proved him in the land of peace, and you shall soon know him in the swellings of Jordan. But the more you prove him the more shall you discover that he is excellent, and worth the proving, and because his excellence shall become the more and the more manifest, the more you shall look at him; you shall say of him continually, "Thou hast the dew of thy youth. I find thee better and better. Fairest of the sons of men, thou growest fairer. Bread of heaven, thou growest sweeter! Thou wast once like wafers made with honey, thou art sweeter

than angels' food now. Water of life, thou growest more cool ing to my taste and more refreshing to my mouth. I loved thee once I love thee more now; I delighted in thee once, but I delight in thee more fully still." He has the dew of his youth, because he has real excellence.

But still, I do not know but that the most excellent thing you and I have ever seen would still lose its freshness to us, because we should discover all its excellence; but Christ will never lose his freshness to us, because *he is divine*. Whatever is not divine, in due time must lose its freshness. Suppose, now, the Lord should give to us, to engross our attention and to interest us, the whole fields of space. Suppose in a future eternity the Lord should say, "Now I will give to you the works of my creation to be for ever objects of your attention." My dear friends, there is enough in a single flower, the botanist tells us, to occupy a man's wonder and admiration for a number of years. There is so much skill and wisdom in but a single flower of the field, that a man might look and wonder as long as that. Well, just put together all the flowers and all the creatures of this world, and all the mighty rocks that are full of ancient secrets—and imagine that these are to be the objects of our eternal study and interest. I can suppose that a man should exhaust all the knowledge of this world in due time. It might take him thousands upon thousands of years, yet I can imagine that he should so exhaust every thing that was noble about this world, that at last he should sit down and say, "I know every secret, I have made every rock tell out its story; I have ripped open every vein of truth, and I have ransacked all its secret treasures. But there are the stars yet to look at"—and imagine the man going from star to star, and discovering all the wonders of God in the seemingly boundless universe. Here is a great conception for you. Imagine that all these stars were inhabited, and all full of fresh wonders; yet I can imagine that in myriads of myriads of years all these might be exhausted. Some stupendous mind, growing by that upon which it fed, might at last say, of all the secrets of God's works, "I know them all. I have found out every wonder, and all the storehouses of God's wisdom have I ransacked;" but, beloved, Jesus Christ is such a boundless field of knowledge, and Christ

has such a miracle of wonders, such a gathering up of all the secrets of God, that a whole eternity must run dry before we can exhaust them. He will have, he must have, the dew of his youth, because he is divine. The wing of knowledge, though it had the fields of space to fly in, must at last reach a boundary The ship of wisdom, though it sail across the sea that seems without a shore—the as yet unnavigated sea of ether—must at las reach a haven; but give a man Christ to be the subject of study the object to awaken his interest and excite his wonder, and then you have indeed shot an arrow, but it shall never reach its mark. It shall fly on, on, on, and shall never stay. You have bidden the man plunge into a sea without a bottom. You have launched him, like Noah's ark, upon a sea without a shore. He may go on, and on, and on, climbing up the steps, but he can never reach the summit. Christ must be full of interest to him, because he is divine, and, therefore, inexhaustible.

Another reason why Christ will always have the dew of his youth, is, because *he meets all the cravings of our nature.* I am introduced into a place full of the wonderful works of man. I look, and I look on; but why is it that I shall get tired of them, however interesting they may be? Because it is all for my eye. But suppose that there is the sweetest music at the same time, then I have something for my ear. Why is it that even then I shall get tired? Because I have another craving—I hunger and I thirst. But suppose I have the richest dainties afforded me; and I sit and feast, and look and hear sweet sounds all the time, why is it that, even then, I should, for a time, however excellent might be the entertainment, grow tired? Why, because I have other propensities that are not brought into play—other animal desires, even, which have not their fair room for exercise. But suppose me to become a Solomon, so that I have all which the eye, or the ear, or the passions can delight in. Should I, after all, be tired? Yes, Solomon tried it, and he said, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." Why? Because there were other cravings in Solomon's mind which all these things did not satisfy. The mind was craving after knowledge, and Solomon satisfied that, for he wrote of all things, from the hyssop on the wall up to the cedar of Lebanon. But there was one thing that was not satisfied, that was

his spirit. His spirit was craving for communion. There was a hunger and thirst that went after something higher than mere mental food, and his mind could not be contented with mere wine to drink and meat to eat, but wanted knowledge. His spirit could not be contented with mere knowledge, and he was wanting something higher than that—the ethereal and celestial ambrosia of the glorified. His spirit was panting for communion, and therefore Solomon felt that all here was vanity, because it could not satisfy that craving. But give me Christ, and I have no other craving beyond that—Christ is all. Whatever we may wish for it is all in Christ; it is impossible for the mind that is filled with Christ to imagine any thing else; and in the day when we shall get to heaven—we talk a great deal about golden harps, and golden crowns, and golden streets—I imagine we shall find that all those golden harps and crowns and streets are contained in that word "Christ;" and when we shall get Christ, and shall enjoy him, we shall feel that we have nothing else that we can wish for. He that drinketh desireth to eat; but he that drinketh Christ drinketh food. He that eats desires to be clothed; but he that feedeth on Christ is clothed at the same time. He that is clothed needeth something wherewithal to adorn himself; but he that is clothed in the righteousness of Christ is clothed in the court dress of heaven, and hath all the jewels of divinity upon him. He that is adorned yet needeth something wherewithal to wash himself and keep himself beauteous; but he that is clothed in the righteousness of Christ and adorned with God's grace, is washed and is clean every whit. And he that is clean needs to be kept clean; he that has Christ shall be kept clean. Dear friends, there is nothing that a sinner can want—there is nothing that a saint can want, that is not in Christ. There are many things that we think we want that are not in him, but nothing we really want an be absent from him, for "in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," and the fulness of the Godhead must be more than fulness for manhood. "It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;" and if all fulness cannot meet our wants, what can? Therefore, shall we never be weary of Christ, because every craving of the heart is satisfied in him.

I will mention only one other cause. We shall never be tired

of Christ, because *the want that we have after Christ can never cease.* While I am on earth I shall never cease sinning; therefore I shall never cease wanting a fountain filled with blood to wash me in. While I am here my conscience will never stay accusing me; therefore I shall never cease seeking an advocate. While I am here I shall never cease from trouble; therefore I shall never cease from wanting him who is the consolation of Israel. While I am here I thall never get rid of weakness, therefore I can never weary of him who is my strength and consolation. While I am here I shall never, I fear, cease from backsliding; therefore can I never cease from love to him who restoreth my soul, and leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. You have heard the story of the company who crossed the desert; they had exhausted all their water, and they knew not where they should find any; but at last, after some days' march, they came near a turbid stream of the most filthy water, and in dashed the camels and defiled it worse, by moving all the mud at the bottom, and mixing it with the water. But the poor thirsty creatures who had come across the arid desert were so thirsty that they drank what was more earth than water, and thought it sweeter than any wine they had ever tasted. But after they had satisfied their thirst did they think so? did they then think the water sweet? No, then they understood what it was that they had been drinking; and after their thirst was removed, you could not have compelled them to drink it again until their thirst again returned in all its force. And so long as the Christian is here he will always have the pangs of hunger, he will always have all the sufferings of a spiritual thirst if Christ be removed from him, and, therefore, that will always make even the bitter thing sweet. How much more shall the inward and everlasting hunger of the saint make a sweet thing of Christ yet more sweet! He must have the dew of his youth upon him, because we shall always have an appetite for him as long as we are here, or if we lose it for a little while—for fools will abhor all manner of meat sometimes—yet that appetite must and shall return again, and we shall again fly to those living waters with the wings of a dove—hasten again to these cooling streams, with all the speed of the panting hart that longs after the water-brook, for it must

drink or die. Therefore, beloved, you see, yet again, that because we shall always want Christ, therefore will he always be fresh to us.

"But," says one, "we shall not want him in heaven." Who told you that? Whoever told you has misled you. Not want Christ in heaven! Why, beloved, if you could take Christ away from heaven you would take heaven away altogether, and leave every saint in hell. They do not want Christ in heaven in one sense of the word, because they have got him. Therefore they do not want him as the Scotch use the word "want." But they still need to have Christ with them every hour, for he is the sum and substance of heaven. If I shall not want Christ to cleanse me in heaven, yet I shall want Christ to commune with him. If I shall not need the blood to wash me, yet I shall need the burnt-offering wherewithal to bless and praise God. If I shall not want him to pray to him, I shall need him to praise him. If I shall not require him to forgive me, yet I shall want him to embrace me. If I shall not need him as a Shepherd, I shall need him as a Husband. If I shall not want him as a Priest, I shall want him as a King, that I may for ever serve him with joy and gladness. He shall have in eternity the dew of his youth.

III. WHAT ARE THE LESSONS WE SHOULD LEARN FROM THIS? The first is a lesson *for the pulpit, a lesson of admonition.* Dear brethren, we who occupy the pulpit must take care we never entertain the idea for a moment that the Gospel is worn out. There is a good deal of nonsense talked about a Gospel adapted to the times. People say that the way Whitfield preached, and the way that John Berridge and Rowland Hill preached, was all wrong. True, many sinners were converted under their ministry, but you know sinners then were a different sort of sinners to the sinners of these days, different shaped sinners, and they do not want the same sort of preaching. They do say the devil is improved. I don't know, I find him worse if any thing—improved the wrong way. They say that sinners are improved, and do not require to be addressed with the same fiery, burning words as of old. The nineteenth century has become so learned that it has got beyond the simple knowledge of Christ crucified; it has become so erudite that the simplicity of the Gospel is far behind

it, it has marched on so far ahead that it has left the cross miles in the distance. Well, do not believe them for a moment, my dear brethren. If you want to wake up the people of England, preach an old-fashioned Gospel; if you want to crowd your halls, and gather thousands round you, it is the truth as it is in Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, that you must preach. And as for the matter of your style, you may leave that to the occasion, and never study that. Only stick to your subject. Stick to the simple Gospel in all its freshness and glory. Pentecostal youth shall return to the Gospel again when it is preached in all its fulness and purity. I know why it is that some preachers like to be obscure; it is because it gives a man a peculiar kind of popularity. I believe some people like to hear a man whom they cannot understand; and some, when they hear a man they can only just understand themselves, are very flattered by it, because the minister seems to say to them, "Now, you know you are all very clever people, I must therefore preach you a very clever sermon;" and then they feel pleased to think that the minister should have such a good opinion of them, and should think them so enlightened. But when you go to hear some plain blunt fellow that just blurts out the Gospel and believes that to try to be eloquent when he is preaching would be just as stupid as to paint the rose or to whitewash the lily, then you say, "Well, now, he did not compliment me; why he talked to me and all of us as if we had been a common lot of clod-hoppers and crossing-sweepers. He told us just the simple story of the cross, and there is nothing flattering in it." Ay! and by the grace of God I trust that from our pulpits there will never be any thing that is flattering to you. "We preach Christ and him crucified, not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but with the demonstration of the Spirit and with power." And rest assured that there will be more unction and more dew resting upon the enunciation of the simple truths of the Gospel, there will be more freshness to the hearers, than there will be upon the most polished oratory garnished with almost seraphic eloquence, and elaborated until it grows far beyond the comprehension of ordinary intellects.

The second lesson *is a caution, a homily of self-examination* to each one here present. Do you take less interest in the Gospel?

do you find it grows dull to you, that Christ has lost his freshness? Let me tell you that Christ never has lost his freshness. You may have lost yours. What you should ask yourselves is —"Have I found the right Christ? If the Christ I have found has lost his freshness to me, is it not very likely I have found a wrong Christ, one of my own making, one of my own conception? for the real Christ is always fresh, always interesting, always new. Have not I either got the wrong truth, or got it the wrong way?" I said the wrong truth; have I contradicted myself? And yet that is the palpable contradiction of this age. One man says, "Yes," and another man says, "No." I am told it is uncharitable to say he is wrong if I am right; but I cannot make it out how both are to be right, or how yea and nay are to be made to run together. He will be a clever man that is able to tie the tails of yes and no together, and make them run in the same row. But so it is. If you have lost your interest in the Gospel, it is not a right one that you have received; if you have lost your interest in Christ, it is because it is not the Christ of God. It is very probable that if your former zeal and your former delight in Christ have departed, that you have made a mistake, and it is well that you question yourselves very solemnly, lest you should be found building upon the sand when you thought you were building upon a rock.

I have just another word to add, and that is a *word of aspiration*. If Christ has the dew of his youth upon him, let us, my dear friends, who serve the Lord Jesus Christ, aspire to show the world that we do so. In the olden time, such was the dew of Christ's youth, he made his people love him so much that they were ready to die for him; they gave all their substance to him; they lived a life of shame, and they were prepared to die a death of pain. Now let us prove to the world that Christianity has not lost its ancient vigor, that there is blood yet left in the earth, that the arm of the Church is not yet withered. Let us prove to the world that if Christ made his people holy in olden time he makes his people holy now; that if the religion of Christ made men disinterested, and devoted to him, zealous for his cause, prepared them to live and helped them to die, it can do so now. It is for you and for me to prove to the world that our religion has not

lost its force by letting them see its force in our daily life. Emulate the noble army of martyrs, the glorious host of confessors; seek to live like the goodly fellowship of the prophets, and like that noble company of the apostles; and when you shall live the holy and devoted lives they did, then shall all the world say, "These men have been with Christ, for they have got the dew of the youth of Christianity upon them. They are like the old Christians, and therefore the old religion has not grown old, so as to be likely to depart and pass away."

SERMON XVII.

THE HIGH ROCK.

"From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I."—PSALM lxi. 2.

IT is supposed by many that David wrote this psalm at the time when he fled from his son Absalom. That trial was one of the most grievous of all the afflictions of David's greatly-chequered life. It was but a little thing to be hunted like a partridge upon the mountain-top by Saul; it was but a little thing to be entrapped by Achish, and to sojourn among the Philistines an alien from his mother's children; nay, all the afflictions of his preceding life are but little things compared with this. This was his favorite son, one in whom his soul delighted, for he was an excellent and comely personage in his outward appearance, and had a lordly and kingly carriage about him; he was David's darling, although, in his moral character, utterly unworthy of this distinction. This child of his, who was the nearest to his heart, had the greatest opportunity to cut him to the quick; those things we allow to take the chief place in our bosoms have the greatest power to give us grief. Absalom, first of all, kills his brother, and then, by dint of courtesy and such seeming and pretended generosity, which demagogues always know how to use, won the affections of David's people from their rightful monarch, and then blew the trumpet and made himself king against his father. Nay, more than this, he sought his father's life; it was not sufficient to take the crown, but he longed to smite the head that should have worn it. His father was driven from his house, was made to cross, with a few attendants, over the brook Kedron, on a dark and doleful night, far away from

the sanctuary of God and from the house of the Lord; he had to dwell in the midst of a wood and sleep among his armed men, and, at other times, upon the open plain. Who can tell the griefs of this monarch? Wave after wave rolled over him. He had often said he desired only to be like the sparrow to build his nest, and like the swallow, always to dwell beneath the eaves of God's sanctuary; and now his great trouble is that he is driven far away from God's house to what he calls "the ends of the earth." Then, if he thought of the cause of this his exile, how must he have been grieved! For his son, his darling son, the son of his heart, the son whom he had pardoned, the son whom he had honored, the son whom he had recalled from a banishment he richly deserved—this son had smitten him. And we know that old quotation which is repeated many and many a time, and is always true—

> "How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is
> To have a thankless child."

And here was one who was not only unthankful but who drove his father into exile and sought his life, added to this the fact that David always clung to this child even in the time of his greatest iniquity. When at last he was compelled to send out his armies against the rebel, you remember he charged all his soldiers to "take care of the young man Absalom; slay his followers if you please, but take him alive if you must take him, and bring him gently; bring him not to me as he deserves to be brought, in an iron cage, like something wilder than the wildest beast; bring not his head to me, thrust him not through with spears, dig not a pit and cast in his body and cover it up with stones: but bring him back to me, I will again press him to my bosom, for I love him still—he is still Absalom my son, my son!" Now, from the very fact that he loved this young man his sorrows must have been peculiarly poignant. If a man can bring his mind to thrust out from his bosom one that has proved ungrateful, then half the battle is over. If love can cut the link —can say, I have done with thee, I will reckon thee now no more my friend or my child—then the heart steels itself against its deepest sorrow, and the arrow rattleth against the harness.

But not so. David still opened wide his breast to his unworthy son. Ah, let us remember, we who stand in the relation of children to our parents, that it is in our power to give our parents the greatest possible grief; and yet would we not, each of us, sooner die than that those who brought us forth should have to sorrow on account of us? Yet haply there are some of you who are bringing your parents' gray hairs with sorrow to the grave. O, ye that are cursing your father's God—that are breaking the day that your father reckons to be holy—ye who would despise the Gospel which your fathers would maintain—if ye care not to grieve God, at least pause ere you grieve your parents. Push them not into the tomb before their time, lest their ashes testify against you, and lest in the hour of *your* trouble, when *your* children treat you in like manner, you should have to learn the bitterness of rearing in your own bosom the serpent that shall sting you with the deadliest venom. Let each of us take heed that we deal gently and tenderly with the age of our parents, and always seek to foster those who have tenderly fostered us.

With this preface we now turn at once to our text, and I think we shall understand it all the better from this little sketch of history. "From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I."

There are three truths here. The first truth is, that prayer is always available: "From the ends of the earth, when my spirit is overwhelmed, I will cry." The second truth is, that sometimes even the believer cannot get to Christ as he could wish, but that then there is something provided to lead him to Christ: "Lead me to the rock that is higher than I." Then, in the third place, we shall consider Christ under the aspect of a rock that is higher than we are.

I. In the first place let us recollect that PRAYER IS ALWAYS AVAILABLE—in every place and in every condition of our spirit "From the ends of the earth will I cry unto thee." Suppose it possible for us to be banished to the uttermost verge of the green earth, to "rivers unknown to song;" suppose us to be hastened far away, where dwindling daylight dieth out, and where the sun's bleak ray scarce scattereth light on the world—where

vegetation, dwarfing and declining, at last dies out; suppose us banished into exile without a friend and without a helper—even there, from the ends of the earth, we should find that prayer was available. It would still appear a delightful privilege to cry unto God. In fact, if there be a place nearer than another to God's throne, it is just the end of the earth, for the end of the earth is the beginning of heaven. Where our strength ends there God's omnipotence begins. Nature's extremity is God's opportunity. Again we repeat it, the end of the earth is the beginning of heaven. If the day should come when monarchs should banish God's people, their banishment would be an object of contempt, for can they banish the men that are strangers wherever they may be? Is not my Father's house a large one? You dome, the blue sky, its roof; the rolling seas, the swelling floods, the green meads, the huge mountains—are not these the floors of his house? And where can I be driven from the dominions of my God, and away from the voice of his love? Banishment to the Christian may seem a trouble, but if he looketh up and seeth his Father's house and beholdeth the smile of his God, he will know that banishment is to him an impossibility. But supposing us to be banished from every thing good and dear to us, even then we should not be banished from God's throne. "From the ends of the earth will I cry unto thee."

I think David meant by "the ends of the earth," in this case, a place where he should be far away from his friends, far away from human help, and far away from God's sanctuary.

God's people are sometimes brought into such a condition that they are *far away from friends.* They walk the streets of London, and they think, "Oh, if I could tell my sorrow to a friend, then I might find relief; but amidst all the myriad faces that hurry like a stream along the road, I see not one that tempts me to tell my tale. I look and find myself, a stranger amidst multitudes of countrymen. If you know what it is to have a trouble which you are compelled to bear yourself, which you could not tell even to those of your own house, though your friends would have been ready to help you if they had known, yet it was such, that with all their readiness they would not have had ability to assist you in, and such that the biggest words could not have

your best to damn others! Remember, last January, when you took that young man into the tavern for the first time, and laughed at all his boyish scruples, as you called them, and told him to drink away, as you did. Remember, when in the darkness of night you first led astray one young man whose principles were virtuous, and who had not known lust unless you had revealed it to him; you said at the time, "Come with me; I'll show you London life, I'll let you see pleasure!" That young man, when he first came to your shop, used to go to the house of God on Sunday, and seemed to bid fair for heaven—"Ah," you say, "I have laughed religion out of Jackson, he doesn't go any where on a Sunday now except for a spree, and he is just as merry as any of us." Ah! sir, and you will have two hells when you are damned; you will have your own hell and his too, for he will look through the lurid flames upon you, and say, "Mayhap, I had never been here if you had not brought me here!" And ah! seducer, what eyes will be those that will glare at you through hell's horror?—The eyes of one whom you led into iniquity! what double hells they will be to you as they glare on you like two stars, whose light is fury, and wither your blood for ever! Pause, ye that have led others astray, and tremble now. I paused myself, and prayed to God when I first knew a Saviour, that he would help me to lead those to Christ that I had ever in any way led astray. And I remember George Whitfield says when he began to pray, his first prayer was that God would convert those with whom he used to play at cards and waste his Sundays. "And blessed be God," he says, "I got every one of them."

O my God, can I not detect in some face here astonishment and terror. Doth no man's knees knock together? Doth no man's heart quail within him because of his iniquity? Surely it cannot be so, else were your hearts turned to steel, and your bowels become as iron in the midst of you. Surely, if it be so, the words of God are most certainly true, wherein he saith, in the seventh verse of this chapter—"The stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle, and the crane, and the swallow, observe the time of their coming;

but my people know not the judgment of the Lord;" and certainly that prophet was true who said, "The ox knoweth its owner, and the ass his master's crib; but my people doth not know, Israel doth not consider." Oh, are ye so brutish as to let the reflections of that guilt pass over you without causing astonishment and terror? Then, surely we who feel our guilt have need to bend our knees for you, and pray that God might yet bring you to know yourselves; for, living and dying as you are, hardened and without hope, your lot must be horrible in the extreme.

How happy should I be if I might hope that the great mass of you could accompany me in this humble confession of our faith; may I speak as if I were speaking for each one of you? It shall be at your option, either to accept what I say, or to reject it; but, I trust, the great multitude of you will follow me. "Oh, Lord! I this morning confess that my sins are greater than I can bear; I have deserved thy hottest wrath, and thine infinite displeasure; and I hardly dare to hope that thou canst have mercy upon me; but inasmuch as thou didst give thy Son to die upon the cross for sinners, thou hast also said, 'Look unto me and be ye saved all the ends of the earth,' Lord, I look to thee this morning, though I never looked before, yet I look now; though I have been a slave of sin to this moment, yet Lord, accept me, sinner though I be, through the blood and righteousness of thy Son, Jesus Christ. Oh Father, frown not on me; thou mayest well do so, but I plead that promise which says, 'Whosoever cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out. Lord, I come—

Just as I am, without one plea,
But that thy blood was shed for me,
And that thou bid'st me come to thee,
O Lamb of God, I come.

My faith doth lay its hand,
On that dear head of thine,
While like a penitent I stand,
And there confess my sin.

'Lord accept me, Lord pardon me, and take me as I am, from

It seems, however, that the Psalmist was in a worse plight than this, for a man might be at the end of the earth and still be happy; for it is not the place that makes the man, but the man that makes the place. A man might be in paradise, in hell itself, if his heart were right. Let a man have his heart full of peace and joy and happiness, and it is impossible to make that man miserable. I have often thought that when people find fault with their station they are making a great mistake; they should find fault with themselves. Many a man is miserable whose head wears a crown, and many are happy whose heads have no place of repose. Some who are clothed in rags have rich hearts, and many that are clothed in purple and fine linen, and fare sumptuously every day, have starving spirits; for, after all, it is the mind that is the standard of the man, and if the mind be happy the place does not signify at all. But, alas, for poor David! he had been wrong without and wrong within too. "When my heart is overwhelmed." I was turning to Calvin's notes upon this text lately, and I found that the translation which Calvin uses puts it thus, "When my spirit is tumbled." A most extraordinary translation, and, as he says, a very rough one. I can only interpret it by a saying of like character in John Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," where he says he was exceedingly tumbled up and down in his mind. And I have thought of that, too, as being a very extraordinary but expressive idea—tumbled up and down. And so it does seem that one meaning of this text may be, "When my spirit is tumbled"—when it is out of order, when it is brought into a kind of chaos and confusion, when, to use another word which expresses closely the idea of the Hebrew, "When my spirit is wrapped over and over"—when my spirit is covered just as a man covers his face in the day of grief, because his sorrow is so great that he shuns the sun, and would not have his fellow-creature's eye behold the anguish of his soul. Then, even then, says he, when my spirit is overwhelmed, even then will I cry unto thee. Turn the heart upside down, and then you will get the idea of its being overwhelmed. Even then what saith the Psalmist? "Ye people, pour out your heart before him." If your heart is turned over, let it be turned over before him. David tells us in one of his

psalms, "I poured out my heart within me." How foolish that was! It did him no good. It was just the wrong place for his heart to be poured out. Afterwards he says, "I have poured out my heart before him." Oh, it is a happy way to pray, when the heart is turned upside down, and out of order, to spill all the contents at the foot of the throne. Perhaps sometimes the overwhelming of our heart is only meant to draw all its dregs out of it, that the very least particle of self-righteousness and self-trust and self-confidence may be drained out at the foot of the mercy-seat, that there may be more room for an overflowing abundance of divine grace.

Imagine again a vessel at sea, and you get an idea of the text once more. It has been laboring in the storm. Sometimes lifted up to heaven, as though its masts would sweep the stars; then again descending until its keel seemed dragging on the ocean's bottom; then shaking this way, and then that way, reeling to and fro and staggering; now starting back—now rushing forwards like a drunken man, or like a madman who has lost his way. At last a huge sea comes rolling on, its white wave of foam can be seen in the distance, and the sailors give up all for lost. Here comes a sea that will overwhelm this cockle-shell of a boat. And on comes the wave, gathering its strength till it dashes against the ship, and—down it goes. It is overwhelmed. The decks are swept, the masts are gone, the timbers are cracking, the ship descends, and is sucked as in a whirlpool. All is lost. "Now," says David, "that is the case with my heart: it is overwhelmed, sucked into a whirlpool of trouble, borne down by a tremendous sea of difficulty, crushed and broken; the ribs of my soul seem to have given way; every timber is cracked and gone out of its place. My heart is overwhelmed within me." Can ye now get an idea of the extreme sorrow of the Psalmist's spirit? "Yet," says he, "even then will I cry unto thee." Oh, noble faith, that can cry amidst the shrieking of the tempest, and the howling of the storm! Oh, glorious faith, that from the bottom of the sea can send its arrows to the heights of heaven! Oh, masterpiece of faith, that from a broken spirit can send up a sound prayer! Oh, glorious triumph, that from the ends of the earth can send

the arrow of prayer all the way to heaven! "From the ends of the earth will I cry unto thee."

And now, Christian man, may God help thee to make up thy mind to this, that where'er thou art thou wilt never leave off prayer, whatever the devil says to thee. If he urge thee to forsake the mercy-seat, say, "Get thee behind me, Satan." If he says you have sinned too much to pray, tell him his argumen proves the reverse: the more you have sinned the more you should pray. If he tells you that your difficulties are tremendous, tell him that the very greatness of the difficulties in which you are involved, should bear you nearer to God. Never cease to cry whilst thou hast breath; and when thou hast no breath, still cry. Long as thou canst speak, cry unto him; and when thou canst not speak, let groanings that cannot be uttered still go up before God's throne. Cease not to pray in every difficulty, and in every strait betake thyself to thy closet, for there thou shalt find God, if thou canst not find him any where else. And let me also say this word to any one who has begun to pray, but who has not yet found peace with God, although he is overwhelmed by a sense of his guilt. My dear friend, if God has overwhelmed you with a sense of sin, and if you feel as if you were far away from mercy —at the very ends of the earth—yet I beseech you cry unto him. Mark, our text says, "Cry." Oh, what power there is in that simple act of crying! As I rode here this evening, I saw a boy sitting down upon the pavement, crying with all his might about something or other he had broken; and I observed some lady, who was going by, stop in a moment, for the poor fellow's face was so much awry, and the tears were flowing so plentifully that she seemed as if she must stop and give him something. And, indeed, I felt inclined, if I had not been in a hurry to come here, to stop and ask him what he was crying for; for one cannot bear to see a fellow-creature crying. All beggars that want to take you in, take to crying, for they know that has an effect upon susceptible ladies who are passing by. And there is a power in tears, and these people know it. The best style of prayer is that which cannot be called any thing else but a cry. Now, if you cannot pray as many do—if you cannot stand up in a prayer-meeting, and pray fluently and eloquently like others—so long as the Lord en-

ables you to cry, I beseech you do not leave off crying. Cry 'Lord, have mercy on me;" "Lord, save or I perish;" "Lord, appear unto me;" "I the chief of sinners am;" "Lord, manifest thyself to me." Cry, cry, cry, poor sinner, and he that heareth the young ravens when they cry will hear thee. Do not think that the voice of thy crying shall be lost. The voice of boasting dies away unheard, but the voice of crying penetrates the ear of God, reaches his heart, and moves his hand to give a plenitude of blessings. Above all things, sinner, if thou feelest thy need of a Saviour, keep on crying; Satan can never harm thee while God helps thee to cry. So long as thou hast got a word of prayer on thy lip, the law has not a word of condemnation against thee. If thou canst cry at God's mercy-seat, then Christ is crying on thy behalf at his Father's glory-seat. Be thou instant in prayer, and thou shalt be successful in it. When thy heart is overwhelmed, from the ends of the earth cry unto God. Thus we have disposed of the first point.

II. Now the second very briefly. THERE ARE TIMES WHEN THE SOUL CANNOT GET TO CHRIST AS IT DESIRES. Then thank God there is the text—"Lead me to the rock that is higher than I." Some people make out faith to be a marvellously easy thing, and so it is in theory, but it is the hardest thing in the world in practice. If men are to be saved on the condition of their repenting and believing, they can be no more saved than on the condition of their being perfect, unless there is added to this condition the promise that the God who requires faith will give faith, and work repentance in them. I have been astonished to find in this age that there are great preachers, and men who, I have no doubt, gather many around them, who tell the people that the condition and the ground of the sinner's justification are his faith, his repentance, and his obedience. Why, the ground of our justification is the righteousness of Christ; and as to the condition there is no condition at all, for God gives justification freely, and he gives faith, and he gives repentance too; it is all his gift. There never was a man saved by faith or repentance which he performed as a matter of duty. Albeit that the Word of God demands of every man that he submit himself to God by repentance, and lay hold of Christ by faith, yet no man ever will

do this, or ever can do it; it is only the sovereign will of God and the sovereign grace of God that give repentance and faith. Sometimes God, in his sovereignty, is pleased to show a man his sin, and not to show him his Saviour, for a season; he strips the sinner, perhaps he leaves him to shiver in the cold before h clothes him, just to let him know what a boon a garment is. H kills him, pierces him through and through with the law, and ther lets him lie to know his own inability for a season before he quickens him again, and makes him alive unto God. The fact is God acts as he chooses with those whom he saves. He sometimes gives repentance and faith at the same time, just as the thunder sometimes follows the lightning speedily; at other times he gives repentance, and then he makes us tarry for many a day before he gives us full assurance of our interest in Christ; but they are sure to follow one another, they must come. God never gave conviction without giving faith at last, he never led a man out of himself, without at last leading him to Christ; if he led him to despair, he afterwards led him to hope; but still there may be a gap between the two, and during such a period it is our business to use this blessed prayer, "Lead me to the rock that is higher than I. Oh! help me to believe. Lord, increase my faith, enable me to see the need of thy Son, give me eyes to look to him who was pierced, and, as thou hast given me eyes to weep, so give me eyes to look on him, and to rejoice." So you see if we cannot believe, if doubts so overwhelm us that we cannot get to Christ to our own satisfaction, remember it is the Holy Spirit's business to draw us to Christ, and we may therefore pray, "Lead me to the Rock that is higher than I."

III. We are now coming to that part of the text which most of all delights my soul, the thought of JESUS CHRIST, WHO IS THE ROCK THAT IS HIGHER THAN WE ARE. We have all got various standards for measuring things; after all, men must measure by themselves. If you hear a man praising another, you will generally find that the reason he praises that other is, because he sees in that other something very much like what he possesses himself. "There," says he, "I love a man that is honest and outspoken." The man means all the while that he thinks himself a remarkably honest and outspoken man, therefore he loves to see

himself in another. After all, we generally measure with our own measuring-rods, we take ourselves to be the test of other people. A few nights ago I proved that in my own case: going along Bermondsey, I looked in at the windows to see what time it was; one clock said ten minutes to seven, another said seven o'clock, and another said ten minutes past. Then I began to think what a pity it was I had not my own watch with me—what was that but a belief that my own watch was infallible, and that all the other clocks might be wrong? Rest assured there is a great deal of trying ourselves on the touchstones of our own infallible selves. And even the Christian is not altogether quite quit of this, and does not leave it behind him till he gets to heaven. So the Lord graciously adapts his Word to our poor littleness, and speaks of Jesus as the rock higher than we are.

Come hither and let us measure the Rock Christ Jesus. Here is a man who is a great sinner. "Ah," he says, "I am a great sinner, indeed; my iniquities reach so high that they smite the very stars; they have gone before me to the judgment-seat of God, and they are clamoring for my destruction." Well, sinner, come thou here and measure this rock. Thou art very high, it is true, but this is a rock that is higher than thou art; a great sinner thou mayest be, and estimate thyself at the greatest thou possibly canst; there, set thy sins down at some inconceivable height; if thou hast thought thyself to be a very Goliath in sin; if thou sayest, "I am as big a sinner as Saul of Tarsus," put thy sin pile on pile, tier on tier, nay, borrow thy neighbor's sins; take them all, and recollect that—

> "If all the sins that men have done
> In will, in word, in thought, and deed,
> Since worlds were made, and time began,
> Were laid on one poor sinner's head"—
>
> "The blood of Jesus Christ alone
> Could for this mass of sin atone,
> And sweep it all away."

However high thy sin may be, there is the covert of a rock in a weary land higher than thou art, and under this thou mayest shelter thyself.

Here comes another forward; he is not a man full of doubts and fears, but he is a man of hopeful spirit. "Oh!" says he, "I have many sins, but I hope that the Lord Jesus Christ will take them all away. I have many wants, but I hope that he will supply them. I shall have many temptations, but I hope that he will ward them off. I shall have many difficulties, but I hope he will carry me through them." Ah! man, I like to see thee have a good measuring-rod, a long one, when it is made of hope. Hope is a tall companion; he wades right through the sea and is not drowned; you cannot kill him, do what you may. Hope is one of the last blessings God gives us, and one that abides last with us. If a man is foodless, and without covering, still he hopes to see better days by and bye. Now, sinner, thy hopes, I would have thee to see, are very tall, and very high; but remember, this rock is higher than thou art. Hope whatever thou pleasest; let thy hope expand itself; let it climb the highest mountain, and stand on it; let it make itself higher and higher, but this rock is higher than thou art. Christ is a better Christ than thou canst hope; he has more mercy than thou hopest for; he has more power to save than thou hopest to receive, more love than thou canst hope to have; he has a better heaven for thee than thou couldst hope to enjoy. He is higher than thou art.

But here comes another, and he says, "Ah! my hope has grown strong, I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is a precious Christ. I can speak well of him, he has been my sure defence in every time of war, and my rock and refuge in every time of distress, my granary in every hour of famine, my light in every night of darkness. I can speak well of him, and in consequence of what I know of him I can believe that he is able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by him. I believe him to be all that he says he is, I believe in his Word, I rejoice in him, my faith scarce knows a bound when I begin to think what he is, and what he has done for me." Ay, but he is a rock higher than thy faith. I love to see thy faith mounting up very high, but remember Christ is better than thy faith, and higher than thy faith. Why, man, if thy faith were twice as big as it is Christ would be a warrant for it all. Nay, if thy faith could be multiplied a thousandfold, so that thou couldst believe

more of him, and better things of him, and higher things of him, still he would be higher than thy faith could ever climb. I do hope to grow in faith, and get higher and higher in that celestial virtue. I think I believe my Master better now than I did once, though sometimes I think my faith faileth me. Yet sure I am I do enjoy a sweeter conscience than I did, and a more quiet peaceful calm than at one time I experienced; and I hope to believ him more surely still; I pray that my faith may continually grow, that, being rooted and grounded in faith, I may grow up a strong man in Christ Jesus; but this I know, though you or I should grow till our faith should be greater than that of Paul, till it should be such a faith that it could remove mountains, while it should say to the fig-tree, "Be plucked up by the roots," or to the mountain, "Be cast into the sea," and it should be done, still even then Christ would be higher than our faith. Oh, we might believe a great deal about him, but would faith grasp all then? It has long arms, but not long enough to encompass Christ; he is greater than faith itself could conceive him to be.

Here comes another: he says, "Ah! blessed be God, I have a golden measuring-rod here—not that of hope, or fear, or faith, but, better still, the measuring-rod of enjoyment." "Ah!" says one, "how high have I been in enjoyment! He hath taken me to Calvary, and there I have seen the flowing of his own precious blood—

> "'With divine assurance knowing
> He hath made my peace with God.'

Not content with that, he has taken me to Tabor; there I have seen my Lord transfigured, and have beheld his glories, as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. Nay, more, he has taken me to the top of Pisgah, and he has bidden me 'view the landscape o'er.' I have seen the joys which he has reserved for them that love him." "But," says the believer, "Christ has said to me, 'Friend, come up higher.' When I first went to the feast, I sat in the lower room of repentance: he came in, and said, 'Friend, come up higher;' and he took me into another chamber called faith. And then he came in again and said, 'Friend, come up higher;' and he took me to the upper room of

assurance. Then he saw me again and he said, 'Friend, come up higher;' and he took me to the upper room of communion. And sometimes he seemed to me to say, 'Friend, come up higher, into the ecstatic bliss which the highest degrees of constant fellowship can give;' and I am now waiting only till he should say, 'Come up higher,' and take me to his own bosom, to tarry with him for ever."

Ah, well, I am glad to hear thee talk thus; I would I had many of those whose pastures are in these high places, many who could say that they had grown tall in these delightful things; but remember this rock is higher than thou art. All thou hast ever enjoyed of him is but as the first beginning of a topless mountain. When I have been in Scotland, I have gone up some mountain there; I have thought, this is a very high place indeed, and what a fine view there is, what a height I have reached! "Ah," some one has said, "but if you were to see the Alps, why this would only seem like the beginning, you would only have got to the foot, when you had got as high as this;" and so it is with you: by your experience, your sweet enjoyment, you think you get to the top of the mountain, but Christ comes and whispers to you, "Look yonder far above those clouds; you have only begun to go up high; this hill of communion is only one step yet; as yet you have only advanced a babe's leap; you have farther to go, far higher than you could imagine or conceive." Ah! this is a rock that is higher than thou art, the highest in communion, and the next to the throne of God.

"Well," cries another, "from what I have heard and what I have read in God's Word, I am expecting very great things of Christ when I shall see him as he is. Oh, sir, if he be better than the communion of his saints can make him, if he be sweeter han all his most eloquent preachers can speak of him, if he be so delightful that those who know him best cannot tell his beauties, what a precious—what a glorious—what an inconceivable Christ he must be!" Ah, friend, I am glad thou art measuring Christ by thine expectation. But let me tell thee, high as thy expectations are, he is higher than thou art. Expect what thou mayest, but when thou seest him thou wilt say with the Queen of Sheba, "The half has not been told me;" and then you will add, "Nor

did I expect the half of this." You may sit down and think of Christ's glories and splendors, of the happiness that he has provided for his people, till you lose yourself in a very sea of thought. The promise dropped into the sea of your heart may go on widening in circles till you have grasped a whole universe of pleasure and delight in contemplating the name of Christ; but remember, when thou hast conceived the most, the rock is still higher than thou art, still above thee, still far above thine head when thou hast conceived and imagined the most.

Ah! let us pause here and think, then what shall we do with a hill that is higher than we are—shall we lie for ever at the base thereof, or not attempt to climb it? God forbid. Shall we pretend we have climbed it? That were presumption. God forbid. Let us press forward, evermore ascending it, ever crying when we get at the greatest height, "Lord, still lead me up, still lead me to the rock that is higher than I am; lead me on, O Lord, till I come to heaven, and even then lead me; lead me beside the living fountains of water, still lead me to the rock that is higher than I am; ever help me to be climbing, pressing forward, looking not on that which is behind but on that which is before, pressing forward to the mark of the prize of our high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Thus have we tried to open the view of the Psalmist, when he said, "Lead me to the rock that is higher than I."

Now, as some of you will be exercised with troubles, remember that the rock is higher than you are. And when your troubles reach you, if you are not high enough to escape them, climb up to the rock of Christ, and there is no arrow of trouble that can reach you when you get there. Satan will be howling at you, and perhaps he will be nibbling at your heel, barking and biting at you—climb into the rock of Christ, and he will not be able to reach you, and you will scarce hear his howling; he will be low down in the valley when you are in the rock higher than you are. Fears will arise and doubts will come in like a flood—there is no place so safe in the time of a flood as a high rock,—climb to the rock Christ, and then though the waves of the sea roar and the mountains shake with the swelling thereof, you will be secure if you are on a rock higher than you are. And, oh!

for ever be seeking, while the world is dragging you down, to be climbing up. If the devil says, "Come down again, come down, and be worldly; come down, and be selfish," always cry, "Lord, lead me up, lead me to the rock that is higher than I am. My country is in the skies, help me to be climbing upwards, never permit me to descend, lead me to the rock that is higher than I am."

And as for you who are still under a sense of sin, who have not yet found the Saviour, let this be your prayer, "Lead me to the rock that is higher than I am." Do not get measuring Christ by yourselves. "As high as heaven is above the earth, so high are his thoughts above your thoughts, and his ways above your ways." Oh, beloved, ye should measure God's grace by the immeasurable; not by your nothingness, but by his infinity. Remember, God's mercy is beyond all bounds, for it swelleth above the flood of our sins. If our sins be as mountains, Christ's mercy, like stars, shines as much above the mountains as above the valleys. Cry out, sinner, cry out when Satan is dragging thee down to the pit; cry out, "Lord, save me from the devouring flames, and lead me to the rock that is higher than I." And then, thank God, it is a rock; it is not a mound that is raised, it is a rock that shall stand, and if I get high on it there is no fear that the rock will shake; I may shake on it, but it will never shake under me. It is a rock, and if my enemies attack me I can hide myself in the clefts of it, and they cannot reach me, for it is a rock; and though ten thousand ages roll away, and many a stone is moved from its place, this shall abide

"When rolling years shall cease to move."

SERMON XVIII.

SPIRITUAL RELIGION.

"It is the spirit that quickeneth: the flesh profiteth nothing." John vi. 63

To a casual reader it looks as if the meaning of this passage lay upon the very surface; but he that has studied the chapter will find that it is a sentence replete with many difficulties as to the exact interpretation of it. I shall not, however, waste your time by entering into any critical discussion of it; but shall only and simply try to give you what I believe to be the mind of the Spirit, as uttered by the lips of Jesus in this passage, and, after I have done that, I shall then revert to what I shall call the meaning which any person would give to it who is not a usual student of Scripture. That being true, although not the truth taught in the passage, I shall briefly enlarge upon it. "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing." I suppose there is not a man in the world who could form any intelligent idea of what a spirit is. It is very easy for persons to define a spirit by saying what it is not; but I query whether there is, or ever could be, any man who could form any idea of what it is. We sometimes talk about seeing a spirit; ignorant persons in ages gone by, and some now, in benighted villages, talk about seeing spirits by night. They must know that they talk contradictions. Matter can be seen; but a spirit, if it clothed itself in any light substance, could not even then be seen; it would only be the substance that would be seen. The spirit itself is a thing which can neither be tasted, handled, seen, nor discerned in any way whatever by our senses, for if it could be it would then be proof positive that it was not a spirit at all, but belonged to the realm

of matter. We divide all things into matter and spirit, and whatsoever can be recognised by the senses in any way is matter, depend on it. Spirit is itself a thing too subtile to be either seen or in any other way recognised by the senses. I say, then, I suppose there is no man living, and never will be any man in this mortal state, who will be able to define a spirit as to what it is, though he may say what it is not.

Now, there is a region where there are spirits dwelling without body. It is certain that in the world to come, in that state which now intervenes between the death of the saints and the day of the resurrection, they are dwelling before the throne of God in a disembodied state—pure spirits, without any embodiment whatever. It may be that angels have some form of bodies; we could not imagine what angels were, if they had not some kind of semblance of appearance; but it is quite certain that the saints before the throne have no semblance of shapes whatever. They are pure spirits; beings whose substance we cannot imagine; purely immaterial, as they are also immaculate. But on earth you will find no such a thing as a pure spirit. We are all spirits in bodies, and, somehow, from the fact that wherever we find souls and spirits, they are always found in bodies, we are very apt to confound bodies and spirits together. But let us always understand that bodies and spirits are distinct things; and though it hath pleased God in this world never to make a spirit without making a house for it to dwell in, called the body, yet the body is not the spirit. "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing."

Now, you will easily learn this, for in man's body no one can tell where the life is. In vain the surgeon lays the body on the table and dissects it; he will find life neither in the brain nor in the heart; he may cut the body in pieces as he pleases—he will not find any thing that he can lay hold upon tangibly and really, and say, "That is life." He can see all the effects—he can see the parts moving, he can see all the appearances of life caused by a supernatural something; but life he cannot see. It is altogether beyond his ken; and after all his searching he would lay down his scalpel and say at once, "There now, the task is all over; there is a spirit that quickeneth this body, but in my

search after life this flesh profiteth me nothing. I might as well search for a soul within a stone or within one of the pillars that support this house as search for a soul within mere flesh and blood if I look for something which I can see, which I can lay hold of, or which, by either taste, sight, smelling or any thing else I can distinguish and designate as being a spirit."

Now, then, brethren, this illustration just brings me to a truth. We are here assembled at this moment spirits, souls. Here we are, bodies; but these bodies are not ourselves; they are the houses in which we live. I question whether there is any man who can define himself; the most any man can say is, "I am; I know I have an existence; but what kind of thing my spirit is I do not know; I cannot tell; I have no knowledge of what it is. I feel it; I know it moves my body; I feel its outward manifestations; I am certain of my existence; but what I am I know not: God alone can say." "I AM that I am," is comprehensible to himself; but man is a being himself incomprehensible; and though God may allow him to say, "By God's grace I am what I am," he cannot tell what he is; he understandeth not his own existence. Understand, then, that as in our being there is a mystery in our flesh, so religion, the true religion of the blessed God, in order to be made like unto us and to be a something which would suit us, must be a religion of spirit; but because we have a body it must have a body in which to clothe itself. Allow me, if I can, to try to make this plain; for if you do not understand it now you will before I have done, I am certain. We are spirits in bodies. Well, then, in order to meet our cases, the great work of God in us must be a spiritual thing; but in order that I may be able to talk about it to you, and that you may be able to hear it with your ears, that spiritual thing must be encased in a body; or else, if it were a pure spiritual thing, I could not talk to you about it, any more than I could talk to you about a spirit, if there were no body in which a spirit could be found, and no body in which I should be able to live to talk about it in. I want to show you this, because there are some persons that are so busy about the body of religion that they forget that religion has got a spirit at all.

Now, what Jesus meant in this passage was, "The mere em-

bodiment of religion profiteth nothing; it is the spirit that quickeneth." Just as, to use my figure over again, in order to perform an act, the mere flesh and blood and arms and legs profit nothing, it is the spirit that quickens all the bones and makes the nerves ply as they ought to do, and the sinews work as they should, so religion has its outward form, it has its ceremonies, it has its outward developments, its body, but the mere outward body of religion is of no use whatever, except the spirit quickeneth it.

I. To begin, then, I will first show you this order as our Saviour, I think, meant it when he first of all stated it. There were some people in our Saviour's day who admired Christ. They admired him as a man, and they thought there was some marvellous efficacy in his flesh and blood. Now, Jesus Christ said to them in the words of our text, "Even my flesh will profit you nothing: it is the spirit that quickens." We would state this truth very cautiously, but very plainly. When our Saviour was upon earth there were some, we say, who admired his person. You remember those who said, "Blessed is the womb that bare thee and the paps that gave thee suck;" and you remember our Saviour rebuked them. He would not have people admire his flesh and think so much of his mere humanity. "No," said he, "blessed are they that hear the Word of God and do it." There were some again who wanted to take the Lord Jesus and make him a king. Said he to them, "My flesh, if you exalt it to a throne, will profit you nothing. I did not come here that you might bow down and venerate my mere flesh, that you might think the mere admiration of myself is religion. It is the spirit, the Gospel that I came to preach, that will benefit you. It is not these outward acts; it is the thoughts and words, of which they are the exponents." Hear what the Saviour says in the next sentence. "It is not your admiration of my flesh tha is of any use to you, for my flesh profits nothing; it is the spirit that quickens, and if you want to know what is the spirit of my incarnation, I tell you that the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life. It is not your venerating my flesh and blood; it is your venerating my doctrines that will be the soul and heart of the religion that I desire you to feel."

Our Saviour, however, was led to make these remarks from the fact that the poor Jews, when he talked about eating His flesh and blood, thought that He meant they were to turn cannibals, and eat Jesus Christ up. Now, any man may smile at so ridiculous an idea; but we know that the idea is still rife in the Church of Rome. The Romanist priest solemnly assures us that the people who eat the bread and wine, or stuff he calls bread and wine, which he hands round, do actually act the part of cannibals and eat the body of Christ, and drink His blood. You ask him seriously; you say to him, "You mean they do it in a figure, my dear sir, spiritually?" "No," says he, "I don't; I mean to say that after I have pronounced certain words over that bread, it becomes Christ's flesh, and after I have said a certain hocus pocus over that wine, it becomes actual blood." "Well," we reply to him, "it is very singular, certainly, and I should say that you do not expect us to believe you, whilst God allows our heads to be occupied by brains; but even if we do believe you, my dear sir, we refer you to this passage here that says, 'The flesh profiteth nothing, it is the spirit that quickeneth,' and you tell the people that they do actually and really receive body and blood. Suppose they do, it is no earthly use to them, the mere body and blood of Christ; and even if they could carnally press it with their teeth, and drink it with their throats, would be of no more use to them than the eating of the flesh and blood of any other man, could be of no service whatever to them, for He himself denounces the error of transubstantiation, and He declares that even His flesh profiteth nothing. It is only the spirit, the spiritual receiving of that flesh and blood that can be of any avail whatever."

While I am here just allow me to say one word; for Popery prevails in this day, and that happens to be the bulwark of Popery, the doctrine that the bread and wine are turned into the body and blood of Christ. Dr. Carson, of Coleraine, son of Dr. Carson, the eminent baptist, has settled off Dr. Cahill in a remarkable way. He has challenged Dr. Cahill to prove that he can turn the bread and wine used in the sacrament into Christ's body and blood. He offers to give Dr. Cahill a hundred pounds if he will let him make a wafer for him, and if Dr. Cahill will

then put it on his own tongue and swallow it in Mr. Carson's own presence. "If the Doctor is not dead in an hour," says Dr. Carson, "I'll give him a hundred pounds." "No," says one, "that is not fair." "Oh! but if he can turn it into the body and blood of Christ, it cannot hurt him, whatever I make it of." "What! would you make it of poison, then?" "Yes, the deadliest I could find." "Would you give him poison?" "I should not give i to him; he would swallow it himself; he would do it of his owr voluntary choice." And Dr. Cahill backs out of that; he canno turn it into the body and blood of Christ; if he could, Dr. Carson says it could not hurt him, for the body and blood of Christ would poison no one. But some wise Romanist says, "That is not fair; the Doctor does not pretend to turn poison into the body and blood of Christ; it is only clean bread." "Very well," says Dr. Carson, "I'll try him another way. I will let him choose a youth from seven or eight Catholic boys; he shall take a quart of wine, and turn this wine in his own peculiar way into the blood of Christ. The boy shall drink the quart, and if he is not drunk in six hours, I'll pay the hundred pounds." "Now," says Dr. Carson, "if that is the blood of Christ, it will not make him drunk; he might drink a hogshead of it, and it would not make him intoxicated." But Dr. Cahill dare not come to such a trial as that; for I think it would very soon be found that the wine would make the boy intoxicated as much as any other wine; therefore, it could not have been turned, even by the great Doctor himself, into any thing like the blood of Christ. The fact is, the lie is so palpable, the delusion is so absurd, that any child of any age would as soon think of believing the cock and bull story we used to read in our childish days, about what the bull said, and what the cock said, to be actual truth, as to imagine it to be a literal fact that any priest, or any man in the world, could ever turn bread and wine into flesh and blood. But even if they could, hear the words of the text: "The flesh profiteth nothing; it is the spirit that quickeneth." So, then, after all, the Roman Catholic Sacrament, if it be actually a cannibal's feast upon the body and blood of Christ, is of no earthly use; but that Sacrament wherein we do spiritually receive the flesh and blood of Jesus,

and in a spiritual way hold communion with Him, is that which quickeneth, and that only.

Now, this brings me to the truth that I want specially to be arrived at. As Christ Jesus in his flesh was the embodiment of his own doctrine, and yet not His flesh, but the spirit of His doctrine quickeneth souls, so the outward forms and ceremonies which Christ has made to be the body to contain the spirit, are of no earthly use at all, unless the Spirit of God be in them. We come to baptism; there are the pool and the water; that pool and that water are, so to speak, the flesh and blood of dedication; that holy ordinance signifies that we do devote ourselves to the Lord Jesus. Suppose, however, our hearts are in a wrong condition, or that we are not converted persons—suppose there is no influence of the Spirit resting upon us during the act of baptism, then the act of baptism is like the flesh to the body, it is a dead thing, it profiteth nothing, because it is without the soul. We come the next Sabbath to the Lord's table: there is the bread broken by God's servant, there is the wine decently handed round by the deacons of the church, and it is sipped; but, mark you, however reverently it is performed, except the Spirit of the living God breathes through the whole divine ordinance, "the flesh," that is, the mere embodiment of communion, will profit you nothing. You might sit at a thousand Sacraments, and you might be baptized in a myriad of pools, but all this would not avail one jot or tittle for your salvation, unless you had the spirit that quickened you. Nay, to go farther, it is not just these two outward ordinances only that need in them the Spirit; it is so in every thing else. You have sometimes read, dear friends, of some great Christians that grew to have much fellowship with Christ by prayer. Perhaps you imbibed the idea that if you were to go home and spend as many hours in your closet as they did, you would get as much profit by it; and, not thinking about the Holy Spirit, you simply devote yourself to your closet as you would to any manual exercise, with a hope of profiting by the closet alone. I tell you, you might be on your knees till your knees were bare, and you might be in your closet till the steam of your devotion ran down the walls; but unless the Spirit of the Lord was in that closet with you, the mere fleshly exercise

of praying would no more avail you and profit you than if you had been chaunting songs to the moon, or standing in the street to sell your goods. Another hears that a certain person has been very much blessed by reading a text of Scripture. "Oh!" says he, "has that text been blessed to such a one? I'll go and read the same passage too." You think that if you do the same act as he does you will be equally blessed; and you are marvellously surprised that when you read the passage, it does no good to you. It made his spirit leap for joy, it filled his soul with the wine of the kingdom, but to you it is like a dry well, or an empty bottle. Why is this? The mere letter in which the promise is put profiteth you nothing; it is the spirit of the promise; it is the life of the Spirit running through the veins of the promise that alone can profit you. You hear that another man meditates on God's law day and night, and becomes like a tree planted by the rivers of water. You say, "I will take care that every morning I will read a chapter, and that every night I will read two chapters." There are certain people who think if they read a good long bit of Bible they've done a great deal. In that spirit they might just as well read a bit of Hudibras; for they just read it straight through, without thinking of understanding it. Many of our ministers think they must read a certain quantity of the Scriptures, and they take perhaps three long chapters out of Ezekiel, and not a soul knows what they are at. If they were to read a Dutch sermon in an English church it would do about as much good. There is a lot about ephahs, and wheels within wheels, but no one understands much about them. Instead of reading as Ezra did, and expounding to the people, they must go on reading,—hedge, hedge, ditch, ditch—one continual steeplechase! Instead of stopping to break the shells and give the kernels of truth to the people, they must read right on. To such persons we would simply say, "Your Bible reading is but the flesh; it is no use to you; it is the spirit that quickeneth; the mere flesh, the mere outward fashion and form of Bible reading will not profit anybody. One bit of Bible prayed over, and bedewed with the Spirit, and made alive, though it be only a short sentence of six words, will profit you more than a hundred chapters without the Spirit, because the hundred chapters without the

Spirit are flesh'—dead; but the one verse with the Spirit is the thing that quickeneth."

I do not know whether I have as yet brought my full meaning out; but I want to let every one understand that it is not the mere outward embodiment of our religion that saves the soul and that profits us; it is the inner spirit of the thing that does it. Mark, I would not find fault with any of these forms, any more than I would find fault with our bodies, because they are not spirits; our bodies are good things for the spirits to live in; and the forms are good things for the spirit to live in; but the form without the spirit, though it be the most decorous, and apparently the most devout that can be performed can be of no use for our soul's eternal profit and ultimate salvation. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing."

Now, my dear friend, Mr. So-and-so, if you will just take your pencil out and cast up your accounts for all the years of your life, they will come to very little, if what I say be true. "I think," say you, "I am a tolerably good sort of man; I have a few faults, but look now what I have done. I have been to chapel twice every Sunday almost since I was a boy—I don't know that I missed once, except when I was ill; that has been very good of me, and no mistake. I always read the Bible every morning; I always have family prayer; that is very good of me; another down to my account. I say my prayers when I go to bed at night, and when I get up in the morning; I very frequently go to prayer-meetings; I don't think any one can find fault with me; really I think I do every thing to make me a truly religious man." Ah! and did you put at the end of it, "Lord, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, unjust, extortioners," and so on, or even like that poor fellow, a Sabbath-breaker, that you saw going the opposite way, and not going to your place of worship. Pity you didn't finish it up; but, however, if you did not in words, you finished it up in your heart. But I pray God to show you that all these beautiful things of yours are good for nothing. There you are—there are your chapel-goings—all flesh; there are your Bible readings—flesh; there are your family prayers—all flesh; there are your good works and excellences—all flesh. You have never received the Spirit of the living God: you dare not say you

have. Well, then, all these things will profit you nothing whatever. It is the spirit alone can quicken; for you know, my dear sir, and let me speak very pointedly—you know you never enter into the spirit of the thing; though you go to your church or chapel regularly, yet you know you might very often as well be at home; for when they sing, you do not sing with all your heart: and when the minister preaches, it is seldom there is much that touches you, unless it is a good intellectual discourse, and happens to fit you, and you believe it, and it meets your views, and so on. You know that into the inward soul, and marrow, and bowels of devotion you have never yet learned to plunge. You know your devotion is like that ox which was slain once in the time of siege in Rome, and was said to portend ill, because when the augur slew it he declared he could not find a heart anywhere. He looked through all the entrails, and no heart could he discover; and hence, the Romans said their city must be destroyed. It was a solemn augury, they said, when the sacrifice had no heart in it. It is just the same with you. You have done all these things; oh! yes, and there has been as much reality in what you have done as there was devotion in the poor Kalmuck's windmill, when he tied the prayer to it, and put it up in the garden, and every time it blew round, that was just one more prayer. There was as much heart in your prayer as there was in his windmill; that is to say, none at all. There it is! How far have you got? Go on no longer with this useless round of performances. I would not have you give the performances up. Stop awhile, and ask God to give you that inward spirit that quickeneth, for that is what is needed; "The flesh profiteth nothing."

But I must speak to you that are the children of God, and I must say to you, How often do you forget this? I know it is not often of a morning that I would leave my chamber without prayer: but oh, brethren, I have often left my chamber without having the spirit of prayer; I should not like to pass a day without reading the Scriptures, but I am afraid it is very often the mere "flesh" of Scripture reading, and not the spirit breathing in the Word that I get. And how often is our conscience satisfied with the mere form without the spirit! Now, if we were what we ought to be, we should never be content with the form, unless

we could see the spirit in it. Mother, would you be content to have a child at home that was dead? Suppose some one should say to you, "Why, this child is just as good a child as ever it was! Look at it! It has not lost a leg, or arm, or any thing!" "Ah, but," you say, "it is dead." "Oh!" says one, "there is no difference. It looks as beautiful now as ever it did." "Ah!" she says, "but there is a vast deal of difference between what it was when it was alive, and what it is now it is dead." And now just transfer that to your poor dead prayers, and your poor dead Bible reading, and your poor dead Sacraments, and your poor dead goings to chapel, and all that! Ah! how many of our sacrifices are just poor dead things, when we bring them, they have died in the night, and then we come and offer them before God! How frequently do we satisfy ourselves with having the "flesh," the embodiment of the sacrifice, and forget the spirit! But let us remember, God only looks for the life: He does not look for the body; so we ought, in all we do for Him, to take care, first of all, for the spirit, and then we may rest quite sure the flesh and blood of the devotion will take care of themselves.

II. This, I believe, is the meaning of the passage. But the common rendering of it, if any one read it without noticing the context, would be, "Why, that means, it is the Spirit that quickeneth; that is to say, it is the Holy Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing." Our friends will excuse me when I say, it cannot mean that; you notice the "s" in the text has got no capital to it. If it meant the Holy Spirit, it would always be noted so, to separate it from the spirit to which I have just referred—the inward spirit, the life of a thing. This word "spirit" here does not mean the Holy Spirit; still, almost every ordinary reader would make that mistake, and say, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing." Well, it is a mistake that will not do him any hurt because if it does not say so there, it does say so somewhere else; and if it is not true in this one particular text, it is true all over the Bible, and it is true in a Christian's experience, so that a man may make a great many worse mistakes than that. Well, then, let us take and make that mistake, and then let us get at the truth of it: "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing.'

How often have I thought, "There is a young woman in the gallery, or a young man: how interested they look during the sermon!" I have met with them, I have admired their characters; they have had an amiable carriage and deportment; there has been much in them that everybody would tell others to imitate and emulate. I have said, "Ah! I shall soon have them added to the Church; there is so much good about them, it will be such an easy transition for them; they are so moral and excellent, it will be very easy for them surely to take a step into the kingdom of heaven." I don't say I have said so in words to my heart; but that has been about what I have thought. Well, there has been a fellow who came into chapel one evening, a queer-looking object certainly; he came running in one Thursday evening, towards the end of the service, not washed or any thing; he only just came to hear something that would make him laugh, as he thought. I did not expect to see him converted. The next time I sat to hear inquiries, in he came, cleaned and washed a bit; but I recognized him for all that, and I said to him, "Didn't you come in one Thursday night, after you had been hammering and tinkering somewhere? I thought you looked a strange one, certainly." "Yes," said he, "and the Lord met with me." Now, I saw many and many a night, and I did not see the young man or the young woman come. Why was this? The Lord meant to teach his servant that "the flesh profiteth nothing." "No," said he, "that man seemed far from God, that young man and that young woman seemed very near to me: I will just let you see that all their morality and all their goodness did not put them near the kingdom of heaven, or help me a bit, I could save one as well as the other, and if I chose to show my sovereignty, I might even let publicans and harlots enter the kingdom of heaven before those who, becoming proud of their morality, would not stoop before me." Have you not sometimes met with a person of such a peculiar character that you have said, "Is it not a pity some one cannot talk with that man?" I often have notes: a father writes, "I wish you could get hold of my son; he is a very interesting young man; if you were to put the truth before him to suit his turn of mind, he would be sure to lay hold of it, for if you knew how his mind

was constituted, you would say at once there was a peculiar adaptation in his mind for the reception of the gospel." Well, I have been told that a dozen times; but I never found it true once—never. "The flesh profiteth nothing." No peculiar adaptation of mind is any more susceptible of gospel influences than another. Dead sinners are all dead, and all dead alike. Some may be black, and some may be white; some may be well washed and dressed, and some may have all the mire and filth of sensuality about them. They are all dead alike, and when converting grace comes to deal with them, it finds as much for its exercise in the one case as in the other; it finds as much to help it in the one heart as in the other—that is to say, it finds nothing to help it at all. It brings it all within itself: it kindles its own fire with its own torch, it blows the fire with its own breath, and asks for nothing in the sinner, be he who he may.

Then, again, we have sometimes said, "If such a one were converted, dear me, what a shining Christian he would make! He is a man of brilliant talent, of great intellectual power, and of extensive fortune. Oh if he were converted, what a jubilee it would be to the Church of God! How much would he do!" Well, do you know, I have always found that these fine people, who, when they were converted were to be somebody, if they have been converted, and we have got them, have not turned out to be quite so great after all! I knew a minister once, who with great joy and gladness baptized a man. It was on a New-Year's Day, and I remember with what self-congratulation he said, "The Lord has sent me one of the best New-Year's gifts I ever had;" and he looked upon that man and said, "Ah! this *is* a brother; he is a great gain to the church; he is a man of such active spirit, of such excellent turn of mind—he is every thing that could be desired." Well, I have just happened to ive long enough to see that man rend the church in sunder, and drive the minister out of his pulpit, and he is alive still, a thorn n the side of that church, and a huge prickly bramble that they would be glad enough to eradicate, but that they scarcely have power enough to do. No; the Lord will show us that 'the flesh profiteth nothing." "You may have him," says the Lord, "if he is such a fine fellow; take him, take him; you will find he

will not be so much after all. I will let you know that 'the flesh profiteth nothing;' it is the spirit alone 'that quickeneth.'" On the other hand, we have seen some come whose flesh could not help them. They were the poor, the mean, the illiterate, the despised; and we have seen the grace of God blaze up in their hearts to an eminence of fervor, and we have seen them stand confident and strong, notwithstanding the nothingness of the flesh; and then we have said, "Verily, O God, it is marvellous how, when the flesh is weak, thy grace is strong;" and we have heard an answer from "the excellent Glory," which said, "Ah! the flesh profiteth nothing; it is the spirit that quickeneth."

Now, I do not believe that there is any form of our flesh, nor any act of our flesh, nor any thing that our flesh can do, or attempt to do, or think of, or suggest, that can in any way assist in the great spiritual work of our salvation. It is the spirit alone that quickeneth; and you will find till you die that "the flesh profiteth nothing," except the devil, and it often profits him; but in God's ways and in God's holy Gospel you will always find the flesh lusting against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh. You will have to feel this truth, that the flesh at its best estate profiteth nothing. "It is the spirit that quickeneth."

Now, my brethren, in conclusion, I will ask thee the question—Hast thou received the influence of the Holy Spirit? and have those influences led thee to worship God, who is a spirit, "in spirit and in truth?" For if not, though some may put thee in the cradle of ceremonies, and rock thee to sleep, I will not be one of them. Although men may tell thee thou art right enough, because thou art so outwardly religious, because thou art no sabbath-breaker, no swearer, no drunkard, I warn thee that unless thou art born again from above thou canst not see the kingdom of God; and when drunkards and harlots, and all manner of ungodly persons, shall be driven from the presence of God, you also shall share their fate, for you are dead in sin and must be quickened by the spirit. No more shall I say, but solemnly entreat the Spirit of the blessed God to touch your hearts with this solemn thought, and lead you to renounce the works of the flesh, and put your trust in Him who is "the Saviour of all men, especially of them that believe." The Lord's mercy rest on you for Jesus' sake! Amen.

SERMON XIX.

THE SAVIOUR RESTING IN HIS LOVE.

"He will rest in his love."—ZEPHANIAH, iii. 17.

ONE of our sweetest hymns commences—

> "How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
> Is laid for your faith in his excellent word:
> What more can he say than to you he hath said?
> You, who unto Jesus for refuge have fled."

Well might the poet put the question, if he had risen up from reading this third chapter of the prophecies of Zephaniah. Oh! people of God, open your ears and your hearts while Jehovah speaks to you by his prophet's lips, and thus addresses you—"Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. The Lord hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy: the King of Israel, even the Lord, is in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil any more. In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not: and to Zion, Let not thine hands be slack. The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing." The words are very simple, but the promises are so weighty that the verses roll along like the periods of a poem. Simple truth, if it be of a most solemn character, when told in the simplest words, is very much akin to the loftiest poetry; and I repeat it, that there was never poem composed by human intellect which could match for a moment, in the sweetness of its notes, with this succession of promises which God here proclaims in the ears of his chosen ones.

We cannot, on the present occasion, enter for a moment into the wondrous depths of the promises herein contained. We should need, indeed, a long period of time before we should be able so much as to explain them; and possibly the whole of life will scarcely be sufficient for us to realize the full of these things in our own experience. We will turn, therefore, at once to the few words of our text, "He will rest in his love." We shall consider these words as referring to the Lord Jesus Christ and as relating to his divine and matchless love, which he hath manifested towards his people in the wondrous works of grace which he has done for them and in them.

"He will rest in his love." This is capable of several interpretations, and each view we take of it has in it something extremely delightful. "He will rest in his love."

I. Here is, first of all, THE DOCTRINE, THAT CHRIST WILL KEEP EVER FAITHFUL TO THOSE UPON WHOM HE HAS SET HIS HEART—"he will *rest* in his love." The love of man is a flickering flame; it may be set for a season with apparent constancy upon an object, but you cannot tell how long it shall abide. However firm, however true, and however fervent it may seem, and even really be, yet trust it not, for cursed is he that trusteth in man, even a man's love, and he that maketh flesh his arm. Trust ye not in a friend, put not all your confidence in any man, for the best of men are but men at the best, and the firmest of men have the frailty of their kind. But God's love is no flickering flame; it does not burn for a little like the crackling of thorns under a pot; it is not to be imaged forth by the fool's mirth, which lasteth but for the season. It beginneth, it waxeth vehement, it diminisheth not, but it groweth from strength to strength, till what seemed at first but sparks becomes a flame, and what was a flame becomes like the beacon-lights of war, and what was but as a beacon becomes as the sun itself, in the fierceness of its heat and in the strength of its goings.

There be some who teach that Christ's love may be set upon a man and afterwards may be removed. Where then remains the comfort of God's people if this statement be true? But Jesus "rests in his love." Where is the value of his affection at all? In what respect can he be said to stick closer than a brother? How

can it be true that many waters cannot quench his love, neither can floods drown it? If these men be right, must not the Apostle Paul have been wrong when he was persuaded that neither height nor depth, nor things present, nor things to come, nor any creature whatsoever, should ever be able to separate him from the love of God which was in Christ Jesus his Lord? Shall we imagine that the Apostle was incorrect in order that this heresy may be thought to be right? Shall we turn away from the positive testimony of Holy Scripture, when that Scripture is in itself so full of consolation to God's people that if once proved to be untrue they may put their hands upon their loins and go to their grave full of misery and despair. But ye know right well that Jesus Christ's love, when once it has engraved his name upon the hand of Christ, never can suffer that name to be erased. Ye believe, and ye believe right well, that he who has a portion in the heart of God has an eternal portion. He who can claim for himself a share of the Father's love, of the Son's redemption, and of the Spirit's care, need never be afraid that all the thievish hosts of hell shall rob him of his divine inheritance. For look ye here, brethren,—what is there that can separate you and me from Jesus Christ's love which has not been tried already? Can sin ever make Jesus cease to love me? If so, he would have ceased to love me long ago. If there be any iniquity that I can commit that would divide me from Christ's love, methinks I should have been separated long ere this, for in looking back upon my own life, I am compelled, with shame and confusion of face, upon my knees to confess, that he has had a thousand reasons for thrusting me out of doors if he had chosen to do so, and millions of excuses might he have framed, if he had blotted my name out of the book of life. He might have said, "Thou art unworthy of me, and therefore I will be unmindful of thee." And more, if Christ had intended to cast us away for our sins, why did he ever take us on? Did he not know beforehand that we should be rebellious, and did not his omniscient eye see all our sins, and detect all our follies? Are we ungrateful? yet he knew we should be. Are our sins extremely heinous? yet he knew how heinous they would be. He could foresee all in his mind's eye. Every spot that was to be upon us, was upon us when he chose

us. Before his omniscient eye, every fault that we might commit was already committed in his estimation. He foreknew foresaw all; and yet he took us just as we were. If he had intended to abandon us and cast us away, would he ever have taken us at all? If Jesus meant to divorce his bride, foreknowing all her faults, would he ever have espoused her? If he meant to cast away his adopted child, since he knew that child's unfaithfulness, would he ever have adopted him? Oh, think not, beloved, that Christ would have done all that for nothing—would have come from heaven to earth, and have gone from earth to the grave, and allowed his spirit to descend into the shades of Hades—would have come all this way, and suffered all that awful amount of torture which is comprehended in the curse, on a bootless errand. Would he not have started back and said, 'I know my bride to be unworthy, therefore I will not redeem her—I will not espouse her? But since he has done it, has espoused her, has put the red ring of his own atonement on her finger, and has hitherto been faithful to her, what shall divorce her? What shall cast her from his bosom whom he died to save? Oh! beloved, it must be true that he will rest in his love, if he has rested in it, though he has had much to distract him therein.

Our sin, then, has not divided, and, we believe, never shall divide us from the Saviour's love. What remains? Can persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, all these do but make the Saviour manifest his love to us the more. If Christ loves his people well in prosperity, he never loves them less in their adversities. Do you believe that Christ loves his children when they are arrayed in purple, and will forsake them when they wander about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, destitute, afflicted, tormented? If so, ye know not Jesus' heart. He loves his people well enough every day, but if he sees them stretched upon the rack and about to die for his sake, if it be possible, the infinity of his love must even overflow itself when he sees them thus doing these things for his sake. Well, said the Apostle, when he had mentioned all these sufferings and pains, "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us."

Sin and sorrow, therefore, are perfectly incapable of rending us from the heart of Christ—he will, he must, rest in his love And this seems very plain if we just pause a moment, and think of what we are to God the Father, and to God the Son. Is not every Christian God's child? And did you ever know a father who did hate his own child? Have ye known a father—ye may have known such, but mark, it was an unfatherly act after all—have ye, I say, known a father who has cursed his son, and has driven him forth, and declared that he was not his son? Ye may have known something of that kind, ye may have heard of such fallen creatures; but mark you, the father's curse could not unchild his child—he was still his child, even when he was cursed. Not the blackest words that ever came from the most embittered heart, could ever take away that child's right to call that man his father—that child is a child for ever if once a child, and that father is a father for aye if once a father.

Now, beloved, in the usual course of nature, we find men will do any thing for their children. There is a poor creature born into the world that is nearly an idiot—that has not one of its senses right—that is nearly blind and deaf—and its parents know that if they can bring it up, it will always be a trouble to them; and yet you see the father and mother, with what studious care they endeavor to save this poor child's life. While others say, "If it were to die it would be a happy release," both father and mother feel that they should be losers by its death. "Ah," said one good old divine, "if a father could have a child that had lost eyes and ears, and feet and hands, though he could not breathe without an engine, though he could not feed without some extraordinary means for the digestion of his food, even then his father would do his best to keep him alive; and so surely shall it be with that great Father, who, when he speaks of himself and of us, always puts his Fatherhood far higher than ours, who says, 'If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give to them that ask him?' And truly I may say, if an earthly father does not wish to lose his child, if he can forgive a thousand faults, if he would endeavor to save a child's life, though loaded with ten thousand diseases, how much rather shall our Father who is in

heaven stand to it that none of his little ones shall perish, but that every one of them shall be preserved. Do you not see that be cause we are God's sons, we are, therefore, Jesus Christ's brothers, and he *will* rest in his love?"

But there is yet another thought. We have a relationship to Christ, and he will rest in his love. We have never heard of a man yet who hated his own flesh. Strangely wicked is it, w have heard of men who have hated their flesh in the mystic sens of the marriage tie, and have driven out the wife by brutality and cruelty; she whom he pledged to cherish and to nurture, has been driven forth by his cruelty; but not his own flesh. The man may become bad towards her who is his own flesh by marriage, but not his own literal flesh. Now, Jesus Christ has taken his people into such a connection with himself, that they are nearer to him than even the wife is to the husband. They are as near to him as our own flesh and blood are to our own head. What will not a man do to save his hand, or the least member of his body? Would he take away his care from even the feeblest portion of his frame? Men are generally tender enough of their own flesh and blood; much more, therefore, will not Jesus Christ lose the members of his body, for we are his fulness, the fulness of him that filleth all in all. And will Christ lose his own fulness? Shall his body be dismembered? Shall the head become a bleeding head, and the trunk a dead corpse? Shall any one member be left to die, to burn, to be destroyed? Oh, no! As surely as we are brought into this relationship with Christ, so surely are we saved beyond a hazard. He must, he shall rest in his love.

II. This is one meaning of the text, and abundantly consolatory to the tried, tempest-tossed child of God. I have thought, however, that there is a very sweet meaning. CHRIST HAS LABORED IN HIS LOVE, HE NOW RESTS IN IT. I will give you pictures. There is a man, who loves his hearth, and his home, and his country, and his Queen. The sound of battle is heard in the land, he girds his sword upon his thigh, and he marches forth to defend all that is dear to him. He fights, he struggles, his garments are stained with blood, and he himself is wounded. It is love—love of his own safety, and that of his family, and love to the glory of his country, that has made him fight and wrestle. The deed is done,

and he comes home. The foe is swept from the white cliffs of Albion, and the land of liberty still is free; Britons are not slaves. He retires to his house, and you see how quietly he sleeps; how joyously he sits down under his own vine and fig-tree, none daring to make him afraid. With what joy does he now look upon the faces that he has preserved, upon the hearth for which he has fought! What satisfaction does it give him to know that the honor of his country is still unstained, and his land is still the home of the free! Now he rests in his love; that which made him fight, now gives him joy; that which impelled him in the day of battle to do great deeds of heroism, is its own sweet reward. Now he rests because the battle is fought, the victory is won, and he, therefore, rejoices in the very love which once caused him to labor.

Now you see the Lord Jesus Christ laboring in his love. Love fetched him from his home in heaven; love disrobed him of his glories; love laid him in Bethlehem's manger; love led him through this weary world three-and-thirty years; love took him to Gethsemane; love oppressed him till he sweat great drops of blood; love made him the great standard-bearer in the fight; love made him stand erect, the focus of the war, when the storm gathered round his brow, and every arrow of the foeman found a target in his heart; love made him stand calm amid the bewildering cry, confident of victory; love made him bow his head, and give up the ghost, that he might redeem his people. Now, now that he is more than conqueror, he rises to heaven, and he rests in his love. Oh, what rest that is! If rest be sweet to the laboring man, how much sweeter to the bleeding man, the dying man, the crucified man? If rest be sweet after toil, how sweet the rest of Jesus after all the toils of life and death, the grave and hell If victory made the soldier's return joyous, how joyous the return of that conquering Hero who has led captivity captive, and received gifts for men! He "doth rest in his love!" Do you not see that the very same thing that drove him to labor now makes a couch for his head? That which made him strong in the day of battle, makes him joyous in the hour of victory—the very love which he bears to his people! For, lo! he sits down in heaven, and thus he thinks within himself: "I have done

it, I have done it; not one of them shall perish; no drop of the hail of God's vengeance can fall on them, it has all fallen on me; I have been smitten, I have borne the curse; they are not cursed, they cannot be cursed, they are delivered." And then his holy mind roves on in meditation—"I have taken away the curse, and I have given them the blessing; I have brought many of them to know nd love me; I will bring all the rest; they shall come that are eady to perish; I will fetch them all in due season; I shall have every one of my blood-bought sheep; they shall be blessed on earth, and by-and-by I shall have them where I am, and they shall feed in these rich pastures; they shall lie down where the wolf is not, and where desolation cannot waste their pastures; the time shall come when I shall have their very bones resuscitated, when their flesh that has lain in the dust shall live again to be with me; so shall every one of them, body, soul, and spirit, with all the inheritance that they have lost, and with all that double portion which I have gotten for them, share the spoil, and wave the palm, and be more than conquerors, through what I have done for them. This gives rest: "He rests in his love." The loved ones are secure in the labors he has wrought.

III. Again. Dr. Gill gives this meaning to the text—one of the meanings, for he is always noted for giving a great variety of meanings to a text, so that nobody knows which is the best. When he is going to explain a text, he always says to us, "It does not mean this thing, it does not mean that, and it does not mean that." Nobody ever thought it did. And after he has mentioned seven or eight things which it does not mean, he mentions four or five things that it may mean, and then he tells us what it does mean. He says the text means, "He shall solace himself in his love." There is something very sweet in love; whether it is sweetest to be loved or to love, I know not; but certainly when the two meet together, they are like two rivers which have flowed through a rich and fertile country, and combine to make some master lake, some inland sea; then are they broad waters indeed. Now Christ sees our love; the love which he has put into us meets the love which he has poured out towards us; in both of these he takes sweet solace. He solaces himself in love; this it is that cheers and comforts him. Some men, when

they would be cheered on earth, drink the wine which stirs their blood; some men find comfort in company, and the noisy, giddy, thoughtless talker makes them glad; others if they would be solaced turn to books, those are their joys—"My library a dukedom large enough." Others, if they would be satisfied, chink their gold, look over their mortgages, their estates, their bonds, nd suchlike things; and some men there are, who in this world have nothing sweeter for solace than the love of those who are near and dear to them. The man who loves his home and his family, and finds his little earthly heaven around his hearth, is one of the happiest men I know of. Can you treasure that thought for a moment, and think of Christ as taking all his delight in his family? I never heard yet that it is ever said he rests in his power. He has great power; see what he has done. He has built the heavens; he has stretched out the earth, and walks through the world, and upholds the clouds with his might; but he never rests there. I know, too, he has great wisdom: he knows all things; he walks the ages past, and the centuries to come, unravels mysteries, foretelling all things, and remembering all that is past; but I never heard that he rested there. There is a great world of angelic spirits waiting in his courts, and he, as King, sits in the very centre of their praise, and before him principalities and powers cast their crowns; but I never heard that he rested there. But he is like the man who loves his family; he rests in the midst of his own beloved ones—his spouse's bosom, the place where he hears his children cry, where he listens to their prayers, the door at which he receives their thanksgiving and bestows his blessing, the house where they wait on him and he waits on them, where they commune with him, and he communes with them—that is the house where he rests. He rests in his love, in the midst of the objects of his love; there it is he finds his own eternal satisfaction, the solace of his heart. Is not that a sweet thought? It has ravished my soul in turning it over, that Jesus Christ should ever find his rest among the poor sons of men. He said, "His delight was with the sons of men," and he now says that is his rest, too.

Oh, how pleasant! He will not sleep anywhere but in the house of his beloved and 'neath no other tree will he recline but

beneath the tree of his own right-hand planting. "The trees of the Lord are full of sap; the cedars of Lebanon, that he hath planted." Oh, it is very easy to understand how he should be to me—"As the apple-tree which is among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons of men." But that he should say the same of me! I can say of him, "I sit under his shadow with delight, and his fruit is sweet unto my taste." But for him to say the same of me!—and turn round to the poor saint and say to him, "O soul! thou art weary; but thou art my rest, and I am thy rest: thou art sick; but thou art my health, and I am thy health: thou art sad; but thou art my joy, and I am thy joy: thou art poor; but thou art my treasure, and I am thy treasure; thou art nothing; and yet thou art my fulness, and I am thy fulness." Oh, what a host of precious thoughts rise up here! we have started a whole covey of sweet things, if we can but stand still and calmly meditate. It is not one, but many thoughts in one—this precious truth, "He will rest in his love. He never rested till he found that all his love was given to us, and he never will rest completely till all our love is given to him.

IV. The Hebrew has yet another idea. In the margin we read, "He will be silent in his love." Why is this? What can silence have to do with love? "He shall be silent in his love." One old divine thinks that Christ means by that, to say, his love is so big it is better to be heard by his saying nothing, than by his attempting to express it. "He shall be silent in his love." What a deal Christ has said in the Scriptures about his love, and yet hearken, O spouse of Christ, the love that he hath not spoken is ten times more than he has said. Oh, yes, there is much love which he has brought out of the treasure-house and given to you; he has a great deal more like it in that strong closet of his heart. Some tributes of his love you have received, but those brigh clouds on high ei nis silent love, those are the massive storehouse of his grace. When you read the promise you say, "Ah, this is precious." Recollect that is not a tenth of what he has not said. He has said rich things, but there are richer things still. He has no. said them, he cannot say them, because they are unsayable, they are unutterable, they cannot be declared. When you get to heaven you will hear them, you cannot hear them here. You

know the Apostle said when he was caught up to the third heaven he heard words which it was not lawful for men to utter. Perhaps he heard a little more of the Saviour's love, as though the Saviour said, "I tell you this, but you must not tell any one else, it is not lawful to utter it down below; I have made you a great vessel, you can hold all this, but as for the rest they are only little vessels. Do not tell them any more, it would burst them do not expose them to too great a heat of love, it would consum them —they would die if they knew more—they cannot understand more. I have told them so much love, that if they only understood all I have told them they would not be able to live on earth, their hearts would burst for joy, and they would be obliged to flee to me above. Therefore I tell them no more, they cannot hear it." So that you see there is a preciousness here, "He shall be silent in his love," as if he could not say it, therefore he would not try to say it, he would just leave it alone. One poet, after praising God with all his might, finds that he can go no further, and winds up his words—"Come, then, expressive silence, tune his praise." That is just the text, as if Christ should say, "I have said a great deal, but my people cannot understand; I will say no more; I shall only now say, 'Come, then, expressive silence, tell my love.'"

There is, however, a meaning that is, perhaps, more correct. He shall be silent in his love. "Shall be silent" may mean that he shall be silent about his people's faults, for from the connection it looks like this. "The Lord hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy; the King of Israel, even the Lord, is in the midst of thee; thou shalt not see evil any more." It looks as if he meant to say he would be silent about his sins. There stands Christ in heaven to-day, pleading for his people. Listen! he says nothing to accuse them. Satan may excuse, but Christ never will. The good that his people do is magnified, and multiplied, and perfected, and then presented before the throne But as for the sins of his people, he casts them behind his back and all he says concerning those sins is this—"I behold no sin in Jacob, neither iniquity in Israel; my anger is cast from me; I have blotted out like a cloud his iniquities, and like a thick cloud his sins." "He will be silent in his love." Sometimes love

makes a man silent. If you hear any thing said against one you love, and you are asked, "Is it not so?" you say, "Well, I am not compelled to bear witness against one that I love, and I will not." You know our law does not demand of a wife that she shall give evidence against her husband; and certainly the Lord Jesus Christ will never give any evidence against his spouse. Never—"he will be silent in his love." If he were called upon to say, "Has thy spouse sinned?" his declaration would be, "I am the sin-offering." "Has she sinned? I am her security. I have been punished in her stead. I can say, thou art all fair, my love, there is not a spot in thee." There will not be a word of accusation from him. She says, "I am all black." He will not deny it, but he will not own it. He says, there is no spot, and he goes on to say, she is all fair in his sight. Oh, glorious silence —he will be silent in his love. So am I inclined to believe it will be at the last great day, when the books shall be unfolded: he will read the sins of the wicked against them, but as for the sins of his people, he will be silent in his love. I sometimes think it will be so, though I cannot speak with authority. "No," he will say, "upon you be the curse who lived and died without repairing to my blood as the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness; but these my people, they had their sins blotted out; and I will not read what is blotted out; I will be silent in my love."

SERMON XX.

SUFFERING WITHOUT THE CAMP.

"Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate."—HEBREWS, xiii. 12.

IN one sense sanctification is wholly the work of Jesus Christ, but there is another meaning which is more usually affixed to the term, in which sanctification is the work of God the Holy Spirit. Many disputes have arisen concerning this doctrine, because all men do not distinguish between the two meanings of the same word. There is one kind of sanctification which signifies setting apart, and in that sense God's people were sanctified from all eternity. They were sanctified in election, before they had a being, for they were even then set apart from the impure mass, to be vessels of honor fit for the Master's use. Again, as redemption hath in it much of particularity and specialty, God's people were sanctified or set apart by the blood of Christ, when on Mount Calvary he offered up himself, an offering without spot or blemish, for the sins of his people. So that it is true that Jesus is not only made unto us wisdom and righteousness, but also sanctification. You will remember, in one of my sermons, the text of which was "Jesus only," I made that remark—that it was "Jesus only" for sanctification. And I have not had any reason to retract the expression; for there is a sense in which sanctification, as far as it means setting apart, is an eternal work, and is a work wholly completed for us by the blood of Jesus Christ and the election of the Father; but still sanctification sometimes, and most generally too amongst certain people, signifies another thing. It means the work of the Spirit in us. There

is a work which God the Holy Spirit carries on from the first moment of our Spiritual birth to the last moment, when we are complete and taken to Heaven—a work by which corruptions are overcome, lusts restrained, faith increased, love inflamed, hope brightened, and the spirit made fit to dwell with the glorified above. That work is the work of God's Holy Spirit; and we must remember, that even though it be the work of the Holy Spirit, still Jesus Christ even in this sanctifies his people. For what does the Holy Spirit sanctify them with? Beloved, he sanctifies them with blood. We know that when our Saviour died, his sacrifice had a double object: one object was pardon, the other object was cleansing; and the blood and the water flowed from the same source, to show us that justification and sanctification both spring from the same Divine fountain; and, though sanctification is the work of the Spirit in us, yet the instrument that the Holy Spirit uses is the Holy blood of Jesus, and the sacred water of his atonement applied to our heart, sprinkling us from dead works, and purging us from an evil conscience, that we may serve God without let or hindrance. So, then, Christian, in thy sanctification look to Jesus. Remember that the Spirit sanctifies thee; but he sanctifies thee through Jesus. He doth not sanctify thee through the works of the law, but through the atonement of Christ. And wilt thou remember, that the nearer thou livest to the cross of Jesus, thou wilt under his Heavenly Spirit have more of sanctification, and growth, and increase therein? So, then, we see that the text, whatever sanctification may mean, is still true—"Jesus, also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate."

Let us pause here a minute, and let each of us ask this question—How far has Christ's purpose of sanctifying me been answered in me? I know that in one sense I am sanctified completely; in another sense I feel my imperfections and infirmities. How far have I progressed in sanctification during this year? How much has my faith increased during this year? How many of my corruptions have I overcome? How much nearer am I living to Christ now, than on the first Sabbath of the last year? How much more do I know of the Saviour? How much closer do I approach to him? Have I more power in prayer? Am I

more careful in my life? Is my spirit more loving than it used to be? Am I more decisive for right? At the same time, am I more meek in standing up for it? Am I more like my Master? Or, am I going backward? Stand still I cannot; I must either go forward in grace or go back. Which have I been doing this year? And I charge thee, O my heart, whatever answer thou hast to give to that, still to remember, that if thou art never so much sanctified thou hast not yet attained. I beseech thee forget that which is behind, and press forward toward that which is before, looking still unto this Jesus, who is the Author and the Finisher of faith. The Lord give you grace that you may be sanctified wholly—the body, soul, and spirit; I pray God to preserve you all unto his coming and glory.

But now the principal subject upon which I wish to discourse is the fact, that Jesus Christ suffered without the gate. You know that when the High Priest offered the sin-offering, because it typified sin, it was so obnoxious to God that it might not be burned upon the great altar, but it was always burned without the camp, to show God's detestation of sin, and his determination not only to put it away from himself, but also to put it away from his church. Now, when Jesus Christ came into this world to be our sin-offering, it behoved that he should be put outside the camp too, and it is remarkable that Providence provided for the fulfilment of the type. Had our Lord been killed in a tumult he would most likely have been slain in the city; unless he had been put to death judicially, he would not have been taken to the usual Mount of Doom. And it is remarkable yet again, that the Romans should have chosen a hill on the outside of the city to be the common Mount for Crucifixion and for death punishments. We might imagine that they would have selected some Mount in the centre of the city, and that they would have placed their gibbet in as conspicuous a place as our Newgate, that so it might strike the multitude with the greater awe. But through the providence of God it was otherwise; and Christ must not die in a tumult, so that he might not die in the city; and when he gets into the Romans' hands they are not to have a place of execution within the city, but one outside the camp, that he might be proven to be the sin-offering by dying without the gate.

I have just one or two thoughts to offer to you very briefly Do you know who the people were that lived outside the gate? If you could have gone to the great Camp of Israel, you would have seen the tents all placed in order—the standard of Daniel there, of Judah there, of Ephraim there—surrounding the Ark of the Covenant; but you would have seen a few wretched huts far away in the rear, outside the camp; and if you had asked, "Who lives there? Who are the wretched people that are put away from kith and kin, who cannot go up to the Sanctuary of the Lord, who cannot join in the songs of holy praise?" The answer would have been, "The people out there are lepers and unclean people," and if you had walked alone through some of the shady glens around the City of Jerusalem, you might have heard in the distance the cry, "Unclean! unclean! unclean!"—a bitter wail that sounded like the sighing of despair, as if it came from some poor ghost that had been commanded to walk this earth with restless step for ever. Had you come nearer to the unhappy being who had uttered so mournful a sound, you would have seen him cover his upper lip, and again cry, "Unclean! unclean! unclean!"—to warn you not to come too near him, lest even the wind should blow contagion from his leprous skin. If for a minute he had moved his hand from his mouth, you would have seen, instead of those rows of scarlet that God had put there, those ruddy lips of health, a hot white mark not to be distinguished from his teeth. His lips were unclean, for there the leprosy had discovered itself; and in a minute he would have covered up that lip again that had the white mark of disease upon it, and again he would have cried "Unclean! unclean! unclean!" Who was that leper a type of? He was a picture of you and of me, my brethren, in our natural state; and if the Holy Spirit has quickened us to know our ruined condition, we shall feel that the leper's cry doth well become our unholy lips. Mayhap have a hearer within the walls of this house of prayer, who is to-day separate from all mankind. With worldlings he dares not go; the harlots and others with whom he spent his living riotously are not now his companions; he cannot bear their pleasures, for they are dashed with bitterness. With the children of God he dares not go; he feels that they would put him outside the camp,

for he hath no hope, no Christ, no faith; he cannot say that Christ hath died for him; he hath no trust in Jesus himself; not so much as one pale ray of hope hath stolen into his poor bedarkened heart; and to-night the inward wail of his now aroused spirit is, "Unclean, unclean, unclean, unclean, and full of sin, from first to last, O Lord, I've been; deceitful is my heart."

Leper, leper! be of good cheer; Christ died without the camp, that thou mightest be sanctified through His blood. I see the leper now stealing through the desert places, not daring to sip of the pool that lies in his track, lest he should communicate contagion to the next that drinks, but seeking out some filthy puddle, that there he might satisfy his throat, where none others should drink, lest they should die. I see him covering up his lip. If his father saw him he must run away; if the wife of his own bosom saw him she must shun his presence, for a loathsome disease is in his skin, and in his garments, and in the very air that comes from him there is death. Well, suddenly, as he steals along, he sees a Cross, and on it lifted up one that dies. He standeth there astonished; he thinketh, surely he may come near to a dying man, leper though he be; to the living he must not come, but to the dying he cannot bring a new death. So he draweth nigh to him, and the lips of the dying man are opened, and he says, "Verily, I say unto thee, This day shalt thou be with me in paradise." Oh! what joy and rapture rush through his lepered spirit! How his heart, that had long been heavy, and baked like a black coal within him, begins again to burn with lambent light! He smiles: he feels that that man, that marvellous man, has forgiven him, and ere he has begun to feel it the blood falls on him, and the leprosy is cleansed, and he goes his way, for his flesh has come unto him even like unto the flesh of a little child, and he is clean. O leprous sinner! hear it to-night! Look to him that died without the camp, that poor unclean sinners might find a Saviour there. That is my first lesson: if the Lord the Spirit apply it, it will be a precious one to many a sin-distracted heart.

But, believer, didst thou never feel as if thou, too, wast unclean and without the camp? Brethren, let me tell you a little of my own heart's feelings, and let me see whether you have ever

felt the like. You have often known yourselves to be children of God; I have felt myself with much joy to be certainly assured of my interest in Christ; suddenly sin has surprised me, some unhappy propensity has developed itself, and I have felt as if I could not meet my God. When I was on my knees in prayer I seemed as if I could not pray; I felt like the unclean one that must be put outside the camp—like Miriam, who though the leprosy was but for a little time, would still be unclean for seven days. And when I have come to the Church of God, I have felt as if the meanest Christians there were so much superior to myself that I would have been glad to have been a footstool at their feet. I would have crept into any part of the Church, if I might but have known myself to be the meanest lamb in Jesus' fold. I have seen the deacon, and I have seen the church member, and oh! I have thought, "Brethren, ye are happy; but my heart is sad, for I am not worthy to be called God's Son. Father, I have sinned; I have done grievously, and have transgressed;" and for a little while faith hath seemed sluggish, and hope hath been dull, and the sense of sin hath rested on us, and we have seemed to be quite put away. We read the Bible; we could get no comfort there. The Heavens seemed like brass above our heads; no shower of Grace fell upon our thirsty souls: both God and man seemed to put us outside the camp. I believe that many times in a Christian's experience he will have to feel the same. I do not mean mere Christians—little Christians—but I mean the greatest Christians, those that live nearest to their God—God's Aarons and Miriams, who sometimes have to be put without the camp. Who, then, is there amongst us that will not sometimes be unclean? Surely not any of the great ones of Israel could always live without contracting some ceremonial defilement; for you know that under the Jewish law the sitting upon the bed of leper made a man unclean, you know also there were many things that naturally happened unto men that rendered them unclean for seven days. And who shall wonder if, through the infirmities of our bodies, through the companionships into which we are called, through the evil thoughts of our flesh, we are as often unclean as the Jews were? And who wonders that sometimes the Lord should put us, as it were, out of the camp

for a little season, till we have been purged with hyssop and have been made clean—till we have again been washed with water, and have been thoroughly purified by the washing of water through the Word!

Ah! but, brethren, what a mercy it is that when we are out of the gate, Christ is outside the gate too! Oh! poor backslider! doth thy conscience shut thee out of the Church to-day? Remember, Christ shut himself out, too. He was "despised and rejected of men." Dost thou feel to-night as if thou couldst not come to the table—as if thy Master would spurn thee from it? Remember, if thou be His thou art welcome; for His table is where his Cross is, and his Cross is outside the gate. Come, sinner! Come, backsliding saint! Come, and welcome! God may seem to have put thee away; but it is only seeming; for we know he has written that he hates to put away. Come, thou, and though thou be without the gate, behold thy Lord, who, that he might cleanse the people by his own blood, suffered without the gate.

I have only one more thought. The Apostle says, in the next verse to our text, "Let us go forth, therefore, without the camp, bearing his reproach." Now, then, if Christ suffered without the camp, let us not be ashamed to suffer there too. I do not think much of the religion of that man who is not put without the camp. If thou canst dwell with the wicked, if thou canst live as they live, and be "hail-fellow well met" with the ungodly, if their practices are thy practices, if their pleasures are thy pleasures, then their God is thy God, and thou art one of them. There is no being a Christian without being shut out of the camp of the world. I can scarce conceive it possible for any man to be sound, at least without being reproached whilst on earth for being too strict, too puritanical, sometimes, mayhap, too melancholy. There must be a grave distinction between a Christian and a man of the world; and where there is no such distinction, or but a slight one, there is most solemn cause for suspicion. When I see a man dress like worldlings, when I hear him talk like worldlings, when I know that all his outward carriage is just like a worldly man's, when I can detect no difference, when I see no mark, no shibboleth in his speech, whereby he is to be detected

from a shibboleth speaking world, when I discover no distinction between him and others, then this I know, "God is not mocked;" that man is in the flesh, and he shall "of the flesh reap corruption." Nay, I will go further still. I can in this age scarcely imagine it possible for a man to serve his Master well, unless he s sometimes shut out of the camp, even of the Church itself. I do not mean excommunicated—I mean something far different from that: I mean, that the man who serves his God aright will sometimes find himself left in the minority, even in the Church. It is never his business so to act, and so to think that others are obliged to differ from him; it is folly to be singular, except where to be singular is to be right; but so lax hath the Church become, so low in its doctrine, so light in its experience, and sometimes so unholy in its life, that to be a Christian now we must be elect out of the elect—elect out of a Church as well as elect out of the world. What pride, on the one hand; what sloth, on the other; what anger, what distrust, what covetousness, what worldly-mindedness! The mass of us are too much mingled with the world, too much joined unto Egypt; and the man that is firm and loves his Master well is a rare man. The man of a loving spirit, the man of a large heart, and yet the man of a determined zeal, and of a steadfast mind—such a man will have to go without the camp, and he will have to suffer now, even as all have had to suffer who have dared to go into the front of the Sacramental host of God's elect, and precede the more tardy followers of the Lamb. If any minister dares to be too bold, too plain, too honest, he must expect to be traduced. Let him reckon on that, and let him go forth without the camp, for that is where his Master was.

If I turn to the page of history to find out the best men that ever lived, do you know where I find them? I never find them among those who were called respectable in their time. There in the page of history, I see great names, Erasmus and others, mighty and learned men. On one dirty-thumbed page I see the name of Luther associated with such epithets as these: dog, adulterer, beast, and every thing that Rome's malice could suggest; and I say, "Ah! this is the right name, this black name here. This is the man; this is the man that God chose, for he

went without the camp." That list of great divines, and of schoolmen, and of theologians there, wipe them all out! This man without the camp, he is somebody, depend upon it; he is the man that God has blest. Turn to another. There is a respectable list of Bishops, and Archbishops, and Deans, and Rural Deans, and Rectors, and Curates, and no end of odd things; and there they are, all as respectable as possible. Great volumes of sermons published, fourteen to the dozen—found on all the bookshelves now-a-days with the dust of years upon them. I read their names, there is one, the other, the other; at last I find a picture by Hogarth—a caricature of a man preaching, with devils coming out of his mouth, and underneath it written, "Fire and brimstone!" I look at the portrait, and I say, "See, that is Mr. Whitfield." Ah! there is the man of the age, depend on it; that man, all black, charged with crimes that Sodom never knew: that is the man! Not the Curate in the other picture, who is preaching to a congregation all asleep, to the text, "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." Not that one; but this man here that is abused, that is laughed at, that is mocked; this is the man that is somebody. So ye shall go on. Ye shall always find that those intruders, those that the Parliament of parsons don't like, those that the great mass reject, laugh, and scoff at—those are the very men that God blesses. So you will be in very good company, if you will go outside the camp. The great and holy men of years gone by, have all been put away. If an ungodly throng have thrust out our fathers, and have said, "Get ye gone, we want you not," it is true, their children build their sepulchres, and then they thrust us out. What if it be so? We are content to sleep with so goodly a parentage. We think it a high honor to be thrust out of those gates whose only glory is, that good men once passed through them, and whose great disgrace is, that good men pass through them the wrong way—not into them, but out of them. Be ye content to be cast without the camp.

But mark, going without the camp is nothing; it is suffering without the camp that is the thing. Making myself different from anybody else is nothing; it is suffering for truth's sake that is something. It is being crucified with Christ that is honorable.

It is not my being a Sectarian or a Separatist. No, Plymouth brethren, it is not your going outside the camp that is any good; it is your suffering without the camp that proves you to be a believer. O Christians, if ye have to do the same, rejoice! And now, when you come to the table, I shall bid you only recollect that word *suffered*—"suffered without the camp;" and I shall ask you as you sit there to meditate upon that word. Turn it over again and again, and think how body and soul all suffered for you. Then when ye have meditated, will ye be in a fit frame of mind to commune with him who has sanctified you by his own blood, by suffering without the camp. May the God of Mercies give to sinners grace, that, like lepers without the camp, they may look to Jesus crucified for them.

SERMON XXI.

GROWTH IN GRACE.

"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."—2 Peter, iii. 18.

If you will remark, this passage follows immediately the seventeenth verse, where the Apostle says, "Beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness; but grow in grace." He puts the one after the other, as if the one must be the means of the other. There had been some in the Apostle's days who had wrested certain hard expressions in the Epistles of the Apostle Paul, and had wrested them to their own destruction; and, therefore, the Apostle warns Christian men—he warns the beloved sons and daughters of God—to take heed, lest they "be led away by the error of the wicked," and so "fall from" their "steadfastness." And in order that they may know how to stand, and to be preserved from falling, he gives them this direction: "Grow in grace;" for the way to stand is to grow; the way to be steadfast is to go forward. There is no standing except by progression. If you see a simple thing rolling along your floor at home, it will always stand upright as long as it rolls; but when it stops, down it goes. So with the Christian. As ong as he is in motion, so long he stands; but if it were posible for the heavenly motion to cease, then the Christian would fall from his steadfastness. Glory be to God; he will be kept, and shall be presented faultless before the throne of God. The way to stand, then, is to go forward; the way to be steadfast is to progress; the way still to be alive, according to the Apostle, is to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

We will offer, first of all, two or three remarks upon growth in "grace" in general; and, secondly, a few remarks upon growth in grace being intimately connected with the growth "in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

I. First, then, we shall offer some remarks upon GROWTH "IN GRACE" IN GENERAL. What shall we say about it?

The first remark we make is, that there is *a sense in which here is no such thing at all as growth in grace.* If you understand the word grace as signifying free favor, and the love of God towards his people, there is not, and there cannot be, any growth in that at all. The moment a sinner believes, and trusts in his crucified God, he is, in the grace of God, then justified and complete in Jesus. And if he lives till his hair is gray, he will never be more justified, and never be more beloved, than he is the very first moment in which he believes in God. As soon as ever I have a vital communion with the Lamb, I am in grace. Let me live on, let my grace grow, let my faith increase, let my zeal become warmer, let my love be more ardent, yet I shall not be more in grace than I was before. God will not love me more; he will not have a deeper and purer affection in his heart to me then than he has the very first moment when I turn to him; nor will his grace the less justify me, or less accept me, the first moment when I come to him with all my sins about me, then it shall do when I stand before the throne. We never grow in the grace of election. We are always elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father; and in that sense of grace there is neither growth nor retrograde. So also in the matter of justification.

> "In union with the Lamb,
> From condemnation free,
> The saints for ever were,
> And shall for ever be."

And they are at all times as much justified as they are at any other time. Give me to-day to be justified—to-morrow I shall be justified; yesterday I was. As soon as I put my trust in the Saviour, I became complete in grace, so far as that was concerned; perfect in Christ Jesus. I cannot be more than perfect, and, therefore, I cannot grow in grace in that respect; I cannot

receive more justifying mercy; I cannot receive more pardoning grace; for I have had it all at once, and have so become perfect in Christ.

But you will remark our text does not say any thing about grace growing; it does not say that grace grows. It tells us to "grow in grace." There is a vast difference between grace growing and our growing in grace. God's grace never grows; it is always infinite, it cannot be more,—it is always everlasting; it is always bottomless; it is always shoreless. It cannot be more; it could not in the nature of God be less. The text tells us to grow in grace. We are in the sea of God's grace. We cannot be in a deeper sea; but let us grow now we are in it. We cannot be more in it than we are, than we always have been. We are in God's grace; we are in the covenant; we are in the scheme of redemption; we are in union with Jesus; we cannot be more or less so, for we are secure through the blood of our Saviour. But while we cannot grow more in it, and it cannot grow more, we can "grow in grace."

I must make another remark. *It is certain that while the grace of God toward us does not grow, yet there is such a thing as the development of grace.* There are some persons who object much to progressive sanctification, and to any thing like growth in grace. My brethren are welcome to object if they like, but I am sure if they read the Scriptures (they will not object surely to Scriptural terms), they will find growth in grace very frequently mentioned; if that does not mean something of progressive sanctification, then I do not understand the term "growth in grace" at all. It is quite certain there are degrees of the development of grace. You will not say the young man who has been converted but the last few months knows as much of grace, understands as much, has as much faith and as much love, as the man who has for the last twenty or thirty years stood in his Master's service. You will not tell me that one man who is scarcely ever seen coming up to the house of God, who is in a daily state of religious starvation, stands on a par in grace with a man who is laboring for his Master, whose love is evident to all, and whose faith is testified before the whole congregation. You will not tell me there is a dead level in Christianity. If you tell me so, I tell you that

you have no eyes, or that you do not look about you. For it is certain there are some further advanced than others; some with greater faith than others have. There are "great faiths" as well as "little faiths," great loves as well as little loves; there are men of ardent spirits who have grace more developed in them than others. It is true, they are not more loved of God than others, not more justified, nor more accepted, for in that we al stand on a level, and there is no difference; but as to the deve opment of grace and the display of grace in our souls, every o e must admit that there is a difference between different saints. I cannot understand the difference existing between different n n-isters of God, if it is not because of the difference in the degrees of grace. Some have just started and have preached a little about Redemption, but they have not got far enough to preach about Election, or at least not about the vital union of every blood-bought child of God with the person of Emanuel; or if they should now and then preach upon that they cannot talk about the eternal security of the saints in the breast of Jesus, and how against wind and tide they shall all sail to heaven. They have not grown enough in grace for that. Will not every one admit there are such things as degrees of development of grace? while it is true that there are none of us more justified, more elect, more chosen of God, and loved of Him than any others are.

But now for a third remark, and that is, *that growth in grace is not to be measured by weeks, and months, and years.* There are persons who look upon the age of a man to tell how much he knows about divine things. "Oh!" say some, "such and such a young man, what should he know about divine grace? There is a hoary-headed father there; he must know a great deal more." You will very often find out your mistake. God delights to show how he scorns and scoffs all the distinctions of man. He delights to show how he makes the young men prudent, and that he gives to the children knowledge and discretion. It has ever been one of His boasts, that "out of the mouths of babes and sucklings he ordains strength, because of his enemies." It is true, we do believe, and we should believe that there is more knowledge beneath the gray head. Generally speaking, there

will be. Yet God, in order to display his sovereignty, has so arranged that he will sometimes put his treasures in an earthen vessel that has not been fashioned but a few years. Do not suppose persons grow in grace according to their years. Some grow faster in grace in five minutes than others in fifty years. I believe some saints progress further in grace in one single month than others do in twelve months or twelve years. I am sure I may speak concerning myself. I have grown more in grace sometimes in one hour than I have at other seasons in a week, a month, or a year, when God in his infinite wisdom has been pleased to give me a vision of the Saviour, or to open up my depravity, or break up the fountains of wickedness that lay beneath in the soul. I have learnt more in one hour, when the Holy Spirit's hand has been upon me, than I have in weeks and months simply with my own study. The growth in grace has not any thing to do with time. God's people do not grow like trees grow. Sometimes they take a start and grow upward; at another time they are growing downward. Sometimes, apparently, the sap sleeps within the branch—a winter time comes over it, and it is asleep. Do not imagine, my dear friends, that because you are getting old you are growing in grace. People are continually warning young men of their danger. So we are in danger. But let me remind you that there is not an instance in Sacred Scripture of a young man's disgracing his profession; but there are instances in Scripture of men of middle age and of gray hairs doing so. It is thus: we, who are young, are in the greatest danger, and therefore God keeps us to show his honor; but you conceive you are not, and therefore God suffers you to fall, that he may stain the pride of your glory, and let you see that it is not any thing in flesh, neither age, nor standing, nor rank, nor condition; but that he holdeth up the humble and casteth down the proud. David did not fall into sin until he had come certainly to maturity and into the very prime of life, and then he sinned with Bathsheba. Lot did not transgress before he came an old man. If you turn to the pages of Scripture, wherever there has been a lamentable fall—a Peter or any other—it has been a man who has grown up and become strong in years, because God would show us that it is not mere years

that can teach us grace—in fact, that years, and age, and learning, and talent have nothing to do with grace; that he could, if he liked, take a child of six years old, and pour wisdom and knowledge into the lips of that child that could puzzle the seers of this world. So He will do. He always takes the most unlikely beings, and because men have said experimental preachers must have gray heads, He says, "Nay; it shall be a youth that shall lead the multitude; it shall be a child out of whose mouth I will pour words of wisdom, for I will stain all human glory and show mankind that he is not the preacher but God; that it is not him that willeth, but God that showeth mercy; that it is not the man, but the God in the man. He could dispense with the man altogether; at any rate, he will have the man he pleases, and at what age he pleases, and qualify him as he pleases.

Now, once more, *growth in grace is not to be estimated by our feelings.* There are some of you, beloved, who think you are not growing in grace because you do not feel as lively as you used to do. "Ah!" say you, "when I was young every thing was good then. What peaceful hours I then enjoyed. I would go over hedge and ditch to hear the Gospel preached; it mattered not, I had such an intense desire to hear about God and Jesus Christ, such love to the Gospel, that when I once got to hear a minister preach, it mattered not who ever he might be, it all seemed sweet. But now I am so depressed, I cannot enjoy the words I used to do." Do not think because your wild heat is gone you have not grown. When we light a fire, we always put the straw and such like at the bottom; and when we first light it there is a great deal of flame and a great deal of smoke that rises. But afterwards, when the flame gets hold of the coals, there is not so much blaze, but there is really more heat. You may have some of your flame and smoke departed, but then it gets to be more solid fire; we would rather warm our hands by the coals than by the straw, for that must soon go. So with grace. It begins with flame, catches the lighter substances, lays hold on the imagination and the passions; but, in after life, it appeals to the judgment, and makes the man one solid lump of burning fire. He is not a little flame rising towards heaven that the wind might blow out with a puff; but he becomes so strong

a fire that the wind shall but increase the flame, and shall make the heat the greater. So with you. Perhaps you are become more solid though you are less fiery. Do not suppose when you are depressed, therefore, you are not growing. Many of God's plants grow best in the dark, and He often puts them in the dark to make them grow. When you are growing upwards, recollect there is such a thing as growing downward. You might have had yesterday a divine manifestation that took you up to the top of the delectable mountains. You must not think you are big because you are high, for pigmies perched on Alps are pigmies still; and if you were ever so little, it would not make you any bigger if you were taken to the top of St. Paul's—you would be little still. If you are in a mine deep down, do not think you are smaller for that. I tell you you will grow faster in the dungeon often than on the top of a mountain; but it is no pleasant spot. When our depravity is revealed to us, when our desolation of spirit, when our utter hopelessness and powerlessness are uncovered and made manifest by God's Holy Spirit, we grow, I believe, even faster than we do when, on the wings of seraphs, we are privileged to mount on high. Do not measure your growth in grace by your feelings. Some of you make a kind of barometer of your feelings. Do not do so. If we are in Christ, we are in Christ by faith, and not by feelings; and recollect, whether your feelings are good or bad, you are no more or less a child of God. Your faith, sinner, unites you with the Lamb—not your feelings. Trust Him in darkness, trust Him in distress, lean on Him when you cannot see Him, and when there seems nothing to walk on, still tread, for the ground is firm beneath the foot of faith.

Then do not think you are growing in grace *because you happen to be doing a little more for the Church externally.* "Oh!" we often think, "now I am progressing, am I not? I am busy in the Sunday-school, laboring hard there; I am preaching; I am doing this, I am doing the other: now I am progressing." Ah! it is a good thing to be very diligent in good works, and to be abounding in acts of righteousness; but if you begin to say, "Now I am growing," because of this or because of that, you have made a great mistake. It often happens when we are very

full of public labors that we are very short in private de- tions. I must confess that myself—and that is a very lamentable thing —for then I am not really growing. A man may have his hands ever so full before the world, and think he is doing much; but he is not growing after all. Do not think that is any excuse for anybody who is not doing much, you Issachar-like people, like "a strong ass between two burdens, and too lazy to lift either, I will not give you a word of comfort." You are not growing, for you are doing nothing. And those that are doing something must not boast of their growth. It hath more to do with private devotion than public exercise; it hath more to do with meditation than explanation; it hath more to do with contemplation and adoration than with public service. We must look more to the state of the internal matters, keeping a good lookout on the closet. We must well attend to the reading of the Scriptures, and see that that is constantly kept up. If not, however much we may seem to progress outwardly, we are not any richer; we are only beating out the little gold we had into a thinner plate, and spreading it over the surface. The more we do for Christ the more He will do for us; but let us take heed whilst we water other people's vineyards that our own is not neglected, and that the stones of the hedges thereof are not cast down. May God grant you, brethren, to grow in grace.

II. Now we come to the second thought—THAT GROWTH IN GRACE IS INTIMATELY CONNECTED WITH THE GROWTH "IN KNOWLEDGE OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST." In fact, there cannot be any grace at all except as we know Christ, and there can be no growth in grace except as we grow in our knowledge of Christ. We may always test ourselves whether we are growing by this: Do I know more of Christ to-day than I did yesterday? Do I live nearer Christ to-day than I did a little while ago? for increase in the knowledge of Christ is the very test as well as the cause of an increased growth in grace. In order to prove this I will pass over one or two Christian virtues, and you will see they must increase as we know more of grace.

With regard to love, some of us say, how little we love Christ! How many of you sing—

"It is a point I long to know,
Oft it causes anxious thought—
Do I love the Lord or no?
Am I his, or am I not?"

That is a very good hymn—I find no fault with it—but let it be short metre, please. Don't sing the hymn long. Now and then you are very welcome to it, but get through it as quickly as you can. I would rather hear you sing that hymn—

"A debtor to mercy alone,
Of covenant mercy I sing,
Nor fear with thy righteousness on,
My person and offering to bring."

"Oh!" say you, "that I might grow in love. I want to know that I love Jesus. I want to feel my heart going after Him.' Well, the way to grow in love is to know more of Christ. The more you know of the Saviour, the better you must love him; the more you discover of his beauties, of his excellences, of his virtues, of his perfections, and of his glories, the more your soul will be in him. I tell you who do not love Christ at all, it is because you do not know him; for if you knew any thing of him, you would love him in proportion to your knowledge. The more you know of my Master, the more you will love him. You have only lifted one corner of the veil that shrouds his forehead; you have seen but one portion of his visage, and now you love him. Oh, if you had faith to lift the veil entirely, to see his countenance, to mark the majestic sweetness which sits enthroned upon his lofty brow; if ye could descant on his eyes, which are "like the fishpools in Heshbon, by the gate of Bath-rabbim"—if ye could describe him as being "altogether lovely," ah! ye would love him more. Blessed are the men that improve in acquaintance! Jesus Christ is one of those blessed ones; the more you know of him the more you love him. Sweet Jesus! when I saw thee first I loved thee! When first thy wounded hand and bleeding side were uncovered to me, then I loved thee. Ah! but that love is nothing compared with what I have now. And, oh! when I shall see thee as thou art—when my soul becomes changed into love, the love I have now shall seem to have

been nought but a spark; ay, very hatred itself compared with that love which I shall have to thee then! Know more of Christ; read more of him; think more of him; ask about him more because you will be sure to grow in the grace of love in proportion as you know more of Christ.

So with regard to *faith*. What is the reason why so many of us groan because our faith is so little? It is because we do not know enough of Christ. There are many people who want to know a great deal about Jesus. They think if they knew more about Jesus they would have more faith. "Oh!" says one, "when I look at myself, I think, 'Oh, what is to become of me?' Then I want to see if there are not some evidences. I think, 'Well, there is so and so, and that looks good.'" All wrong—all wrong! You have no business to look there—no business at all. You won't grow in faith by looking at yourself. One look at Jesus is worth fifty at yourself. If you would have more faith, keep your eye on Jesus. The sweet wounds of Christ on Calvary are the mothers of faith; and these are the breasts from which faith must draw its nourishment. If you grow in faith you must live near to the cross. The sweet flower of faith was first sown by a drop of blood, and it must be watered by it every day. Know more of Christ; think more of him, and your faith will increase. Your little faith would soon get strong if you lived more on Jesus. If you would become Greathearts by-and-bye, and knock those great giants about as terribly as old Greatheart did of old, live near to Jesus; live with Jesus; feast at his banqueting table; for there is no food so strengthening as the flesh of my Lord, and no wine can so invigorate you as the blood of Jesus Christ our Saviour.

So with regard to our courage; for that is a Christian grace, and one in which many are very terribly deficient. Our Christian courage will always increase in proportion as we know Christ. We have sometimes little Christians that have not Christian courage enough, I was about to say, to speak to a cheese-mite; they would not be able to profess the name of Christ before the smallest creature in the world; they would be ashamed to tell they loved the Saviour almost before the bare walls, for fear some bird of the air would hear them and tell the tale.

They are so ashamed of their own faith (and yet it is a real faith) that they scarcely dare to speak. The smallest stone in the road would make them stumble; a straw would be almost as great as a range of mountains like the Himalayas; they would be entirely cast out of the road if they had the least prospect that there could be a shadow in it for them to pass by. This is because we do not know Christ that we are afraid of any thing. I believe, when we come to know Christ, we shall be afraid of nothing at all. Shall we be afraid of man? Nay; we shall say, "Whether it is right to obey God rather than man, judge ye." Shall we be afraid of the devil when we know Christ? Nay; we shall say, "Christ hath got the devil chained, and he can always pull the dog in when he attempts to bite; Christ hath hold of the dragon, and he cannot inflict deeper wounds than Christ willeth." Ah! we shall not be afraid of death, for we shall regard him as an angel of the covenant sent to fetch God's people up to heaven. Courage will always be increased in proportion as we know more of Jesus; and if we could have Christ for our daily and hourly companion, I believe all the hosts of hell, marshalled in battle, would no more affright us than would a flock of small birds that might settle down on our path, but we should say, "Arise, thresh the mountains, and beat them small; fan them, and the wind shall carry them away." If you would have more of courage, get more of the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

So with regard to our *zeal*, which is a grace awfully wanting in these times. If we would be more zealous, we must live more near to Christ. If the Son of Man were to come upon earth, would he find zeal upon earth? It was said, "would he find faith?" once; but would he find zeal? It would cost him a great deal before he discovered much of it, amongst Christians. There would be sound good orthodoxy, but no zeal; there is heterodoxy still no zeal. Where do you find it? Just here and there. There is a remnant, according to the election of grace, who are zealous for God; but in these times, we are sorry to say it, religion has degenerated into a kind of formality. It is a fashionable thing to be pious. We have been going on in the same track as other people; there was an old cart rut, and we all drive along it,

We have kept on at the same pace as our fathers; but, oh! if we knew more of Christ, we should have more zeal. I cannot think it possible for men to lack zeal when they know Christ. They would then say, "Did my Saviour shed his blood for me? and shall I fear to die for him? Did he come all the way from earth and heaven to win a soul, and shall I stop proclaiming it?" Should we have so many lazy preachers if they had got more of Christ in their hearts? If they understood more of Jesus would they think so much of their constitution, and be afraid to preach continually to the people? Oh! if people knew more of Jesus, should we have so many slothful, sluggish, members in our churches, with so many that can make any excuse rather than labor for Christ, who can patch up any empty apology for idleness? No; brethren, if we knew more of the Saviour, if we had more frequent visions of him, if we saw him oftener on his cross, and viewed him more frequently sitting with the crown upon his head, we should say, "I vow revenge against my sloth; I will think all I can do will be too little for so good a Lord; if I might make some reserve, and duty did not call, I will love my God with zeal so great that I should give him all." It is no use to try to get more zeal except by the right way—knowing more of Christ. And if we seek to grow up in zeal by certain ideas of our own, certain ("revivals") as they are called, and all that nonsense, we shall have a zeal like a house on fire; it will do more mischief than it will do good. There may be some heat and a deal of illumination: it will die away by-and-bye into black ashes, poisoning the churches every where. I have seen revivals in England—and I can always tell where "revivals" have been by the scarred state of the places after them—what have been called "revivals," got up by certain extraordinary meetings, and fanned by sundry preachers, who have invented strange doctrines preached hell-fire apparently, calling on men unceasingly to repent, repent, and said nothing of the grace of God. They have for a time stirred up the people to a kind of religious *furor*, and they have left behind a very desert. Before them it was like a garden of the Lord, but behind a desert. The church has been divided; there has been a reaction; they have sunk into the most lamentable condition. If we would have true zeal, a true "love-

feast," it must be by the preaching of the good old doctrine, the good old truth, and the preaching of Christ; not any thing else: for whatever comes from any thing else comes of the devil; to hell it shall tend; its issue shall be destruction, and not salvation. But if we get to the truth of God, there will be "revival" enough. We want nothing but Gospel, good old-fashioned Gospel, to stir the world again. Though men have tried new schemes God will put a stain upon their glories yet. All these heresies must be swept away, and the true Gospel—distinguishing grace of God in all the sovereignty of election—must yet again be preached. And when it is preached in all its fulness, then shall the church be zealous, and then shall Zion arise, shake herself from the dust, and put on her beautiful garments.

One thought more. If we would grow also in the *grace of brotherly kindness*, we must know more of Christ. Oh, beloved! we must lament again. There is too little brotherly kindness. There is a great deal of that mawkish kind of brotherly kindness which consist in this—"we must never say any thing contrary to anybody else's opinion. If we know a doctrinal error, we must not expose it, because love of our brethren implies if they are wrong we would not tell of it." But I think true brotherly kindness is always to preach the truth, and tell our brethren where they are wrong, and give them the right hand of fellowship; to preach whatever we believe to be true, and try to maintain what God has taught us; and then, after all, to say, "Well brother, you differ from me. I am not infallible; I still love you." But that is no love which makes us hide the truth. True love will make us honest, zealous, and affectionate. Why don't we love one another as much as we ought? It is because we do not love the Saviour enough, and we have not seen enough of him. If we had seen more of the Saviour I am sure we should love him better. I met a strange idea in old Burrough's when reading him the other day. He says, "If Jesus Christ were to come down to his church now, he would see some of his children with black eyes; some others would be seen scratched in the face, and some bruised all over. He would say, 'Ha! where have you been?' Lord, I have been fighting my brother, and he did this. He would then say, 'Children fight! the birds of one

nest disagree! how sad it is!'" It is a queer thought, but it is not a bad one. We might think of that a little, for when Jesus Christ comes and finds his people controverting and quarrelling, what will he say? You remember the story I told you before. An old Scotch elder had been disputing with his minister at an elders' meeting. He said some hard things, and almost broke the minister's heart. Afterwards he went home, and the minister went home too. Next morning the elder came down, and his wife said to him, "Eh, Jan! ye look very sad this morning. What's the matter wi' ye?" "Ah!" said he, "you would be sad, too, if you had had such a dream as I've had." "Weel, and what did ye dream about?" "Och! I dreamed I had been at an elders' meeting, and I said some hard things and grieved the minister; and as he went hame I thought he died and went to heaven. A fortnight after, I thought I died, and that I went to heaven too. And when I got to the gates of heaven, out came the minister and put out his hand to take me, saying, 'Come alang, Jan, there's nae strife up here, and I'm happy to see ye.'" The elder went to the minister to beg his pardon directly, but he found he was dead; and he laid it so to heart that within a fortnight the elder himself departed. And I should not wonder if he did meet the minister at heaven's gates, and hear him say, "Come alang, Jan! there's nae strife up here." It would be good for us to recollect that there is no strife up there. Glorified saints have not strife among themselves; and we should love one another more in brotherly kindness if we thought more of heaven and more of our blessed Jesus.

Lastly, there is another grace in which we need to grow; that is the grace *of humility*. I am sure we should increase in that if we lived nearer to Christ. Oh, humility! most precious thing, thou art most rare! He who talks of it most hath least of it. He who preaches of it best full often is least the subject of its power. Oh, humility! I have sometimes thought thou wert a phantom, and that pride was the reality. Humility, where art thou? The depths of poverty say "thou art not in me," for the poor are often proud. The heights of riches say, "thou art not here," for the rich are often proud too. Oh, humility! thou art not to be found in science, for philoso

phy puffeth up. Thou art not to be found in ignorance, the very mother of pride. Oh, humility! where can I find thee? Where art thou? Nowhere can I see thee, or know what thou art, except I sit at the feet of Jesus, and behold myself a lost, ruined sinner purchased by divine love. Oh! if you would be humble, you must look at your Saviour, for then you would say:—

"Alas! and did my Saviour bleed?
And did my Sovereign die?
Would he devote that sacred head
For such a worm as I?"

You will never feel such a worm as when you see your Saviour die; you will never know your own nothingness so well as when you see your Saviour's greatness. When you grow in the grace of God you will be sure to grow in humility. Growing Christians think themselves nothing, but full-grown Christians always think themselves less than nothing, and the more we get near to Jesus the smaller self will appear to be. Self and Christ can never come together. When I stand near self Christ is small; when I stand near Christ, self is small. May God grant you to grow in the knowledge of Christ. Read the Scriptures more. Seek more the influences of the Holy Spirit upon them; spend more time in devotion; ask God the Holy Spirit to give you a fresher gale from Calvary; be oftener on the mount of transfiguration, in the garden of suffering, in the hall of agony, under the cross of crucifixion; live with Jesus and near to him; and so, changed from glory to glory as by the presence of the Lord, you shall each of you grow into the stature of perfect men in Christ Jesus.

SERMON XXII.

HYPOCRISY.

"Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy."—Luke xii. 1.

This age is full of shams. Pretence never stood in so eminent a position as it does at the present hour. There be few, I fear, who love the naked truth; we can scarce endure it in our houses; you would scarcely trade with a man who absolutely stated it. If you walked through the streets of London, you might imagine that all the shops were built of marble, and that all the doors were made of mahogany and woods of the rarest kinds; and yet you soon discover that there is scarce a piece of any of these precious fabrics to be found any where, but that every thing is grained, and painted, and varnished. I find no fault with this, except as it is an outward type of an inward evil that exists. As it is in our streets, so is it everywhere; graining, painting, and gilding, are at an enormous premium. Counterfeit has at length attained to such an eminence that it is with the utmost difficulty that you can detect it. The counterfeit so near approacheth to the genuine, that the eye of wisdom itself needs to be enlightened before she can discern the difference. Specially is this the case in religious matters. There was once an age of intolerant bigotry, when every man was weighed in the balance, and if he was not precisely up to the orthodox standard of the day, the fire devoured him; but in this age of charity, and of most proper charity, we are very apt to allow the counterfeit to pass current, and to imagine that outward show is really as beneficial as inward reality. If ever there was a time when it was needful to say, "Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy."

it is now. The minister may cease to preach this doctrine in the days of persecution: when the faggots are blazing, and when the rack is in full operation, few men will be hypocrites. These are the keen detectors of impostures; suffering, and pain, and death, for Christ's sake, are not to be endured by mere pretenders. But in this silken age, when to be religious is to be respectable, when to follow Christ is to be honored, and when godliness itself has become gain, it is doubly necessary that the minister should cry aloud, and lift up his voice like a trumpet against this prevailing sin, "The leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy."

I am sure that every true child of God will stand at times in doubt of himself, and his fear will probably take the shape of a suspicion concerning his own state.

> He that never doubted of his state,
> He may—perhaps he may—too late.

The Christian, however, does not belong to that class. He will at times begin to be terribly alarmed, lest, after all, his godliness should be but seeming, and his profession an empty vanity. He who is true will sometimes suspect himself of falsehood, while he who is false will wrap himself up in a constant confidence of his own sincerity. My dear Christian brethren, if you are at this time in doubt concerning yourselves, the truths I am about to utter will, perhaps, help you in searching your own heart and trying your own reins, and sure I am you will not blame me if I should seem to be severe, but you will rather say, "Sir, I desire to make sure work concerning my own soul, tell me faithfully and tell me honestly what are the signs of a hypocrite, and I will sit down and try to read my own heart, to discover whether these things have a bearing upon me, and happy shall I be if I shall come out of the fire like pure gold."

We shall note, then, this morning, first, *the character of a hypocrite;* then we shall try to *cast up his accounts for him*, with regard to his loss or gain; and then we shall offer a *cure for hypocrisy*, which, if constantly carried about with us, will certainly prevent us from attempting to deceive. The cure is contained in these words which follow the text—"For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall

not be known. Therefore, whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops."

I. First, THE HYPOCRITE'S CHARACTER. We have an elaborate description of the hypocrite in the chapter we have just read, the twenty-third of Matthew, and I do not know that I can better portray him than by turning again to the words of Christ.

A hypocrite may be known by the fact that *his speech and his actions are contrary to one another.* As Jesus says, "They say and they do not." The hypocrite can speak like an angel; he can quote texts with the greatest rapidity; he can talk concerning all matters of religion, whether they be theological doctrines, metaphysical questions, or experimental difficulties. In his own esteem he knoweth much, and when he rises to speak, you will often feel abashed at your own ignorance in the presence of his superior knowledge. But see him when he comes to actions. What behold you there? The fullest contradiction of every thing that he has uttered. He tells to others that they must obey the law; doth he obey it? Ah! no. He declares that others must experience this, that, and the other, and he sets up a fine scale of experience, far above even that of the Christian himself; but does he touch it? No, not with so much as one of his fingers. He will tell others what they should do; but will he remember his own teaching? Not he. Follow him to his house; trace him to the market; see him in the shop, and if you want to refute his preaching you may easily do it from his own life. My hearer, is this thy case? Thou art a member of a church, a deacon, a minister. Is this thy case? Is thy life a contradiction to thy words? Do thy hands witness against thy lips? How stands it with thee? With a blush, each one of us must confess that, to some extent, our life is contradictory to our profession. We blush and we mourn over this. But I hope there are some here who can say, "Notwithstanding many infirmities, with my whole heart have I striven to run in the ways of thy commandments, O my God, and I have not intentionally spoken that with my lip which I did not intend to carry out in my life." Ah! believe me, my hearers, *talk* is easy, but *walk* is hard: *speech* any man may attain unto, but *act* is difficult. We must have grace

within to make our life holy; but lip-piety needs no grace. The first mark of a hypocrite, then, is, that he contradicts by his acts what he utters by his words. Do any of you do so? If so, stand convicted of hypocrisy, and bow your heads, and confess the sin.

The next mark of a hypocrite is, that whenever he does right *it is that he may be seen of men.* The hypocrite sounds a trumpet before his alms, and chooses the corner of the streets for his prayers. To him virtue in the dark is almost a vice; he can never detect any beauty in virtue, unless she has a thousand eyes to look upon her, and then she is something indeed. The true Christian, like the nightingale, sings in the night; but the hypocrite has all his songs in the day, when he can be seen and heard of men. To be well spoken of is the very elixir of his life; if he be praised, it is like sweet wine to him. The censure of man upon a virtue would make him change his opinion concerning it in a moment; for his standard is the opinion of his fellow-creatures, his law is the law of self-seeking, and of self-honoring: he is virtuous, because to be virtuous is to be praised; but if to-morrow vice were at a premium he would be as vicious as the rest. Applause is what too many are seeking after. They eschew all secret religion, and only live where men may behold them. Now, is this our case? Let us deal honestly with ourselves; if we distribute to the poor, do we desire to do it in secret, when no tongue shall tell? Are our prayers offered in our closets, where God who heareth the cry of the secret ones, listeneth unto our supplication? Can we say, that if every man were struck stone blind, and deaf, and dumb, we would not alter our conduct the least? Can we declare that the opinion of our fellows is not our guiding law, but that we stand servants to our God and to our conscience, and are not to be made do a wrong thing from flattery, nor are we urged to do a right thing from fear of censure? Mark, the man who does not act rightly from a higher motive than that of being praised, gives sore suspicion that he is a hypocrite; but he who will do a right thing against the opinion of every man, and simply because he believes it to be right, and sees the stamp of God's approval upon it, that man need not be afraid that he is a hypocrite; he would be a kind of hypocrite that one has never dis-

covered as yet. Hypocrites do their good works for applause. Is it so with you? If so, be honest, and as you would convict another, convict yourself.

Again: hypocrites *love titles, and honors, and respect from men.* The pharisee was never so happy as when he was called Rabbi, he never felt himself so really great as when he was tuck up in the highest seat in the synagogue. Then he must be ood indeed. But the true Christian cares not for titles. It is one of the marks of Christians that they have generally taken names of abuse to be their distinctive appellations. There was a time when the term *methodist* was abusive. What did those good men say who had it so applied to them? "You call us methodists by way of abuse, do you? It shall be our title." The name "Puritan" was the lowest of all; it was the symbol which was always employed by the drunkard and swearer to express a godly man. "Well," says the godly man, "I will be called a puritan; if that is a name of reproach I will take it." It has been so with the Christian all the world over. He has chosen for himself the name which his enemy has given him in malice. Not so the hypocrite. He takes that which is the most honorable; he wishes always to be thought to belong to the most respectable sect, and to hold an office in that sect which will confer upon him the most honorable title. Now, can you say from your inmost soul, that in religion you are not seeking for honors or titles, but that you can tread these beneath your feet, and want no higher degree than that of a sinner saved by grace, and no greater honor than to sit at the feet of Jesus and to learn of him? Are you willing to be the despised followers of the carpenter's son, as were the fishermen upon the lake? If so, methinks you have but little hypocrisy in you; but if you only follow him because you are honored by men, farewell to the sincerity of your eligion; you are unmasked, and stand before the face of this congregation an acknowledged hypocrite.

There was another evidence of a hypocrite which was equally good, namely, that *he strained at a gnat and swallowed a camel.* Hypocrites in these days do not find fault with us for eating with unwashed hands, but they still fix upon some ceremonial omission. Sabbatarianism has furnished hypocrisy with an extremely

convenient refuge. Acts of necessity done by the Christian are the objects of the sanctimonious horror of Pharisees, and labors of mercy and smiles of joy are damning sins, in the esteem of hypocrites, if done upon a Sunday. Though our Father worked hitherto, and Christ worked, and though works of kindness, and mercy, and charity, are the duty of the Sabbath; yet if the Christian be employed in these, he is thought to be offending against God's holy law. The slightest infringement of that which is a ceremonial observance becomes a great sin in the eye of the hypocrite. But he, poor man, who will find fault with you for some little thing in this respect, straining at a gnat, is the man you will find cheating, adulterating his goods, lying, puffing, and grinding the poor. I have always noticed that those very particular souls who look out for little things, who are always searching out little points of difference, are just the men who omit the weightier matters of the law, and, while they are so particular about the tithe of mint, and annis, and cummin, whole loads of tithe-wheat are smuggled into their own barns. Always suspect yourself when you are more careful about little than about great things. If you find it hurts your conscience more to be absent from the communion than to cheat a widow, rest quite assured that you are wrong. The Thug, you know, thinks it a very proper thing to murder all he can; but if a little of the blood of his victims should stain his lips, then he goes off to the priest, and says he has committed a great sin; the blood has been on his lips—what must he do to get the sin forgiven? And there are many people of the same class in England. If they should do any thing on a Good Friday, or on Christmas-day, poor souls, it is awfully wicked; but if they should be lazy all the six days of the week, it is no sin at all. Rest ye assured, that the man who strains at a gnat, but yet swallows the camel, is a deceiver. Mark you, my dear friends, I like you to strain at the gnats; I have no objection to that at all—only do not swallow the camel afterwards. Be as particular as you like about right and wrong. If you think a thing is a little wrong, it is wrong to you. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." If you cannot do it, believing yourself to be right in not doing it, though another man could do it and do right, yet to you it would not be right. Strain the gnats; they

are not good things in your wines; strain them out; it is well to get rid of them; but then do not open your mouth and swallow a camel afterwards, for if you do that, you will give no evidence that you are a child of God, but prove that you are a damnable hypocrite.

But read on in this chapter, and you will find that these people *neglected all the inward part of religion, and only observed the outward.* As our Saviour said, they "made clean the outside of the cup and platter, but within they were full of extortion and excess." There are many books which are excellently bound, but there is nothing within them; and there are many persons that have a very fine spiritual exterior, but there is nothing whatever in the heart. Do you not know some of them? Perhaps if you know yourself you may discover one. Do you not know some who are precisely religious, who would scarce omit attending to a single means of grace, who practice the ritual in all its forms and all its ceremonies, who would not turn aside as much as a hair's breadth from any outward command? Before the world they stand as eminently pious, because they are minutely attentive to the externals of the sanctuary; but yet they are careless of the inward matter. So long as they take the bread and wine they are not careful about whether they have eaten the flesh and drunk the blood of Christ; so long as they have been baptized with water they are not careful whether they have been buried with Christ in baptism unto death. So long as they have been up to the house of God they are satisfied. It is nothing to them whether they have had communion with Christ or not. No, they are perfectly content, so long as they have the shell, without looking for the kernel; the wheat may go where it pleases—the husk, and the chaff, and the straw, are quite sufficient and enough for them. Some people I know of are like inns, which have an angel hanging outside for a sign, but they have a devil within for a landlord. There are many men of that kind; they take good care to have an excellent sign hanging out; they must be known by all men to be strictly religious; but within, which is the all-important matter, they are full of wickedness. But I have sometimes heard persons mistake this matter. They say, "Ah! well, poor man, he is a sad drunkard certainly, but he is a very

good-hearted man at bottom." Now, as Rowland Hill used to say, that is a most astonishing thing for any man to say of another, that he was bad at top and good at bottom. When men take their fruit to market they cannot make their customers believe, if they see rotten apples at the top, that there are good ones at the bottom. A man's outward conduct is generally a little better than his heart. Very few men sell better goods than they put in the window. Therefore, do not misunderstand me. When I say we must attend more to the inward than the outward, I would not have you leave the outward to itself. "Make clean the outside of the cup and platter"—make it as clean as you can, but take care also that the inward is made clean. Look to that first. Ask thyself such questions as these—"Have I been born again? Am I passed from darkness to light? Have I been brought out of the realms of Satan into the kingdom of God's dear Son? Do I live by private communion near to the side of Jesus? Can I say that my heart panteth after the Lord, even as the hart does after the water-brooks? For if I cannot say this, whatever my outward life may be, I am self deceived and deceive others, and the woe of the hypocrite falls upon me. I have made clean the outside of the cup and platter, but the inward part is very wickedness. Does that come home to any of you? Is this personal preaching? Then God be blessed for it. May the truth be the death of your delusions."

You may know a hypocrite by another sign. *His religion depends upon the place, or upon the time of day.* He rises at seven o'clock perhaps, and you will find him religious for a quarter of an hour; for he is, as the boy said, "saying his prayers to himself," in the first part of the morning. Well, then you find him pretty pious for another half-hour, for there is family prayers; but when the business begins, and he is talking to his men, I won't guarantee that you will be able to admire him. If one of his servants has been doing something a little amiss, you will find him perhaps using angry and unworthy language. You will find him too, if he gets a customer whom he thinks to be rather green, not quite pious, for he will be taking him in. You will find, too, that if he sees a good chance at any hour of the day, he will be very ready to do a dirty trick. He was a saint in the

morning, for there was nothing to be lost by it; but he has a religion that is not too strict; business is business, he says, and he puts religion aside by stretching his conscience, which is made of very elastic material. Well, some time in the evening you will find him very pious again, unless he is out on a journey, where neither wife, nor family, nor church can see him, and you will find him at a theatre. He would not go if there was a chance of the minister hearing of it, for then he would be excommunicated, but he does not mind going when the eye of the church or of any of his friends is not upon him. Fine clothes make fine gentlemen, and fine places make fine hypocrites; but the man who is true to his God and to his conscience, is a Christian all day, and all night long, and a Christian every where. "Though you were to fill my house full of silver and gold," he says, "I would not do a dirty action; though you should give me the stars and the countless wealth of empires, yet I would not do that which would dishonor God, or disgrace my profession." Put the true Christian where he might sin, and be praised for it, and he will not do it. He does not hate sin, for the sake of the company, but he hates it for its own sake. He says, "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" You shall find him a fallible man, but not a false man; you shall find him full of infirmities, but not of intentional lust and of designed iniquity. As a Christian, you must follow Christ in the mire as well as in the meads; you must walk with him in the rain as well as in the sunshine; you must go with him in the storm as well as in fair weather. He is no Christian who cannot walk with Christ, come rags, come poverty, come contumely or shame. He is the hypocrite who can walk with Christ in silver slippers, and leave him when it becomes necessary for him to go barefoot. The hypocrite's religion is like a chamelion, it takes its color from the light which falls upon it? but the Christian's religion is evermore the same. Is this true, then, of any of us? Can we say we desire to be evermore the same? Or do we change with our company and with the times? If so, we are hypocrites confessed, and let us own it before God, and may God make us sincere.

There is another sign of the hypocrite, and now the lash will fall on my own back, and on most of us too. Hypocrites, and

other people besides hypocrites, *are generally severe with others, and very lenient with themselves.* Have you ever heard a hypocrite describe himself? I describe him thus:—you are a mean, beggarly fellow. "No," says he, "I am not; I am economical." I say to him, "You are dishonest, you are a thief." "No," says he, "I am only cute and sharp for the times." "Well, but," I say to him, "You are proud and conceited." "Oh!" says he, 'I have only a proper and manly respect." "Ay, but you are a fawning, cringing fellow." "No," says he, "I am all things to all men." Somehow or other he will make vice look like a virtue in himself, but he will deal by the reverse rule with others. Show him a Christian who is really humble, and he says, "I hate his fawning ways." Tell him there is one who is very courageous for Christ; "Oh! he is impudent," says he. Show him one who is liberal, doing what he can for his Master's service, spending, and being spent for him; "Rash and imprudent," says he, "extravagant; the man does not know what he is about." You may point out a virtue, and the hypocrite shall at once say it is a vice. Have you ever seen a hypocrite turn doctor? He has a fine beam in his eye, large enough to shut out the light of heaven from his soul, but nevertheless he is a very skilful oculist. He waits upon some poor brother, whose eye is a little affected with a mote so tiny that the full blaze of the sun can scarce reveal it. Look at our beam-eyed friend, he puts on a knowing look, and cries, "Allow me to extract this mote for you?" "Thou hypocrite! first cast out the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye." There are people of that sort who make virtues in others into vices, and vices in themselves they transform into virtues. Now, if thou be a Christian, I will tell thee what will be thy spirit, it will be the very reverse; thou wilt be always making excuses for others, but thou wilt never be making excuses for thyself. The true Christian, if he sees himself sin, mourns over it, and makes much ado concerning it. He says to another, "Oh! I feel so sinful;" and the other one cries, "I cannot really see it; I can see no sin in you; I could wish I were as holy as you." "No," says the other, "but I am full of infirmity." John Bunyan describes Mercy, and Christiana, and the children, after having been washed

in the bath, and sealed with the seal, as coming up out of the water, and being all fair and lovely to look upon; and one began to say to the other, "You are fairer than I!" and "You are more comely than I!" said another. And then each began to bemoan their own spots, and to praise the beauty of the others. That is the spirit of a Christian; but the spirit of the hypocrite is the very reverse; he will judge, and condemn, and punish with lynch-law every other man; and as for himself, he is exempt, he is a king, he knows no law, and his conscience slumbers and allows him to go on easily in the very sins which he condemns in others. This is a very prominent mark of the hypocrite, and I question whether all of us must not blame ourselves a little here.

II. And now we are going to CAST UP THE HYPOCRITE'S ACCOUNT FOR HIM. Now, sir, bring us your ledger, and let us have a look at it. You are a hypocrite. Well, what is on the profit side? A good deal, I must confess. Here is, first of all, credit and honor. If you were to say outright, "You are a thief, you are a private drunkard, you can curse God as well as any man;" or if the world should hear as much, you would have no honor; but as it is you have joined the church, and the minister is very fond of you; the deacons and elders think a great deal of you, and you are a very honorable, respectable man. You go walking up to your pew with your Bible and your hymn book, and every body says, "There is an exemplary character;" and they pat their little boys on the head, and say, "May you grow up to be a very good man like Mr. So-and-so." The next advantage is the ease which you enjoy. The minister often preaches a solemn, thundering sermon against sin. You get off all that; you are not a sinner, are you? not at all; who would suspect you? You are one of the brightest of the saints; it is almost a pity you were not one of the twelve; there was one amongst them almost as good as yourself, and his end will probably be yours. You escape every thunder of the law; your conscience rests easy, and the very thing which makes the child of God tremble puffs you up; and the very marks and evidences which cast him down help to exalt you. The sun of the gospel which melts wax, hardens the poor clay of your heart, and you get the more exalted in your self-conceit through every thing you hear. And that is good too, is it not?

very much in your favor, certainly. And then there is another thing. How nicely your shop has prospered through it; that, perhaps, is the part of the bargain which you like the best. Ever since you have made a profession of religion, have not those who go to your church and chapel traded with you? You would not have got on half so well if you had been suspected to be what you really are, but because of that fine cloak of yours, that fine garment of hypocrisy, how nicely you have prospered! What a nice little round sum you have been able to lay by, have you not? All that is the bright side again. And besides that, what honors have you not received in the church. Are not you made a deacon, or an elder; ay, perhaps a minister too: how pleasant that is! And you puff yourself up, and you feel satisfied. "Oh, what a good man am I; other people think I am, therefore I must be. It is true I devour the widow's house; it is true I am not very particular about what I do; nevertheless, the minister, the elders, the deacons think me good, the whole church applauds me; they cannot all be mistaken; surely I must be a special saint." That is your profit side of the account; what about the other side? I think we shall be able to strike a balance that will not be much in your favor, sir.

In the first place, I see a black item down here. Some of the people of the world do not think quite as much of you, as you imagine. The poor widow does not give you much of a character. You will have to be very careful, sir, or your base deeds will come out. The very first item I see down here, is a fear that your hypocrisy will be discovered. It would take you only half as much trouble to be an honest man as it does to be a deceiver. A man who is in the habit of speaking truth need not mind how he opens his mouth, nor where; but a man who lies, should be very careful, and have a very good memory, and recollect all he has ever said before, lest he should trip himself. So it is with you, my friend; your religion is a Sunday religion, and you have to be very careful, so as to make Monday dealings hold their tongues and Sunday doings crow as loud as they can. Hard work! I would not stand in your place to have all the trepidation and fear of discovery which so often comes upon you. No, I would sooner be a worldling, than I would have the fear that con-

stantly haunts you, lest you should stand ashamed before the Church by your base iniquity being discovered. But I see something worse than this, here is constant disquietude of conscience; hypocrites may seem as if they were at ease, but they cannot really be. The Christian who is true to God, and is really his child, can sometimes say, "I know that Jesus has taken away my sin." Assurance, vouchsafed to him by the Spirit, calms his fears and he can rest in Christ. But the highest presumption to which the hypocrite can attain, brings no such calm as that which is breathed upon the Christian by the lips of assurance. He can go to his bed, nay, he can go to his tomb in peace, but the hypocrite is afraid of a shadow, and fleeth when no man pursueth.

And last of all, Mr. Hypocrite, I see an item here which you usually forget; it is this—that despite of your profession God abhors you, and if there is one man more than another who stinks in the nostrils of Jehovah, it is such as thou art—thou miserable pretender. There shall be a special place reserved for thee amongst the damned. Think, man, what shall be thy misery when thy secret deeds of iniquity are read before an assembled universe, and men and angels utter one unanimous hiss against thee. What shall it be when the mask is torn off thee, when the masquerade of thy hypocrisy is done and thou art stripped naked to thy shame, to be observed of all and to be despised of all? What sayest thou to this? Shalt thou go from thy deaconship, or from thy ministry, to be among the devils in hell? Shalt thou go from the sacramental table to drink the sulphurous cup of torment? Shalt thou descend from the song of the sanctuary and from the house of God to the abode of fiends and to the wailing of the damned? Yes, thou shalt as sure as this word is true, if thou goest on in thy hypocrisy. Death shall find thee out, and hell shall be thy doom, for the hope of the hypocrite is as the spider's web, soon swept away; and where is he when God taketh away his hope?

This, then, is the casting up of the hypocrite's account, and there is a deficit of an infinite amount.

III. Now for the matter of the CURE OF THE HYPOCRITE. What shall we say to it? Oh! my friends, I feel that in thus speaking of the hypocrite, I have tried to speak severely, but I

have not been able to reach the heart as I could wish, because it is a mark of human nature that this is the last sin of which we really suspect ourselves, and yet one into which it is most easy to fall. Often do I fall on my knees in an agony of doubt, and cry, "Lord, make me sincere; if I be deceived, undeceive me." I do not think that any Christian will live long without some such seasons of anguishing self-examination. Let me put it to you to-day, let no one exempt himself. You may have been professing Christians for many years, and yet you may have been hypocrites. Remember there was a hypocrite among the apostles, so may there be among the ministers of Christ. There have been deceivers among the apostolic churches, how much more may we expect them among us! Do not look around to find them out, it is God's business, not yours, to find out hypocrites; but look at yourselves to see whether you are not one. Driving along the other day in the wind I observed a great branch fall just in front of me. I remarked that it was rotten, and wondered within myself how long that might have been upon the tree, and yet have been rotten after all. Then I thought, "Oh! if the wind of persecution were to sweep through the church, should I fall off like a rotten branch? Would not many of my hearers fall off? They have been united to Christ professedly for a long time, and have spoken for him, perhaps preached for him, but if the time of trial, which shall try the earth, should come upon us again, how many of us would stand? Oh! my hearers, do not be content to take your religion at second-hand; let it not be a superficial work. Do not think that because you have seen me and have seen my elders, and we have admitted you into the church, you are therefore all right. We have been deceived many times; it is not hard work to deceive a kind heart. I have looked into the eyes of some, and have tried to read their very soul, and yet I have misjudged; I have seen tears in their eyes while they have made a profession of Christ, and yet they have been deceivers after all, and I have been very grossly taken in. In fact, the more kind-hearted a man is the more will human nature endeavor to impose upon him. I am certain I have used the utmost diligence to weed out of my church those whom I have suspected of hypocrisy, and greater diligence shall yet be used.

But, oh, do deal with yourselves, I beseech you. I will not send you to hell blind-folded if I can help it; I do not wish to be in error myself, and God forbid that I should suffer you to be deceived. Oh! if you be not true Christians, away with your profession altogether. If it be not sound work, down with it. Better see the house tumble now, than let it stand till the rain descends and the floods come, and the winds beat upon it in the dread eternity of the future. Oh, no, I would rather send every heart home uncomfortable than let the hypocrite sit down at ease; I would rather wound the child of God than allow the hypocrite to escape.

But now for the cure of the hypocrite. What shall we do to cure ourselves of any hypocrisy that may exist among us? Let us recollect that we cannot do any thing in secret even if we try. The all-seeing God, apprehended in the conscience, must be the death of hypocrisy. I cannot try to deceive when I know that God is looking at me. It is impossible for me to play double and false when I believe that I am in the presence of the Most High, and that he is reading my thoughts and the secret purposes of my heart. The only way in which the hypocrite can play the hypocrite at all is by forgetting the existence of God. Let us, therefore, recollect it—wherever I am, upon my bed or in my secret chamber, God is there. There is not a secret word I speak in the ear of a friend but God hears it. Do I seek out the most private part of the city for the commission of sin—God is there. Do I choose the shadow of night to cover my iniquity?—He is there looking upon me. The thought of a present Deity, if it were fully realized, would preserve us from sin; always looking on me, ever regarding me. We think we are doing many things in secret, but there is nothing concealed from him with whom we have to do. And the day is coming, when all the sins that we have committed shall be read and published. Oh! what a blush shall crimson the cheek of the hypocrite when God shall read the secret diary of his iniquity! O my fellow-professors, let us always look upon our actions in the light of the great outreading of them in the day of judgment. Pause over every thing you do, and say, "Can I bear to have this sounded with a trumpet in the ear of all men?" Nay, take a higher motive, and say, "Can

I endure to do this and yet to repeat the words, 'Thou, God, seest me.'" Ye may deceive men, and deceive yourselves, but God ye cannot, God ye shall not. Ye may die with the name of Christ upon your lips, and men may bury you in sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection, but God shall not be deceived neither by your profession nor by men's opinion. He shall put you in the scales, and if you be found wanting, he shall cry, "Away with him." He shall ring you, and if you have not the ring of the pure coin of grace, he shall nail you down for ever as a counterfeit. He shall strip the mask off you. Virtue is most adorned, when unadorned the most. To detect you, you shall be stripped naked, and every cloak shall be torn to tatters. How will you endure this? Will ye dig into the depths to hide yourselves? Will ye plunge into the sea to find a way of escape? Will ye cry for the rocks to hide you, and the mountains to fall upon you? In vain shall you cry. The all-seeing God shall read your soul, shall discover your secret, shall reveal your hidden things, and tell the world that, though you did eat and drink in his streets, though you preached his name, yet he never knew you, you were still a worker of iniquity, and must be driven away for ever.

Come, let us just for one second reflect, that we shall soon lie upon our death-bed. A few more months, and you and I shall face the cruel tyrant, death. It will be hard work to play the hypocrite then; when the pulse is faint and few, when the eye-strings break, when the tongue is cleaving to the roof of your mouth, it will be in vain to try hypocrisy then. O may God make you sincere, for if you die with an empty profession, you lie indeed. Of all deaths, methinks the most awful is that of the hypocrite, and after death, for him to lift up his eyes and find himself lost—and for ever! O make sure work of it. May God give you true grace and true faith, and may we all meet in heaven. This is our earnest prayer, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SERMON XXIII.

CHRIST PRECIOUS TO BELIEVERS.

"Unto you therefore which believe he is precious."—1 Peter, ii. 7.

This text calls to my recollection the opening of my ministry. It is about eight years since, as a lad of sixteen, I stood up for the first time in my life to preach the gospel in a cottage to a handful of poor people who had come together for worship. I felt my own inability to preach, but I ventured to take this text, "Unto you therefore which believe he is precious." I do not think I could have said any thing upon any other text, but Christ was precious to my soul, and I was in the flush of my youthful love, and I could not be silent when a precious Jesus was the subject. I had but just escaped from the bondage of Egypt, I had not forgotten the broken fetter; still did I recollect those flames which seemed to burn about my path, and that devouring gulf which opened its mouth as if ready to devour me. With all these things fresh in my youthful heart, I could speak of *his* preciousness who had been my Saviour, and had plucked me as a brand from the burning, and set me upon a rock, and put a new song in my mouth, and established my goings. And now, at this time, what shall I say? "What hath God wrought?" How hath the little one become a thousand, and the small one a great people? And what shall I say concerning this text, bu that if the Lord Jesus was precious then, he is as precious now? And if I could declare then that Jesus was the object of my soul's desire, that for him I hoped to live, and for him I would be prepared to die, cannot I say, God being my witness, that he is more precious to me this day than ever he was? In the recollection of his unparalleled mercy towards the chief of sinners, I

must anew devote myself to him, and afresh surrender myself to him who is Lord and King.

This remark is uttered by way of introduction; it may seem egotistical, but that I cannot help. I must give glory to God in the midst of the great congregation, and pay my vows to the Lord now in the midst of all his saints, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem.

My text states a positive fact, namely, that *Christ is precious to believers.* This shall be the first part of our discourse; then in the second we will try to answer the question, *why is Jesus Christ so precious to his believing people?* And conclude by declaring the test whereby you may try yourselves whether you are believers or not; for if you be believers in Christ, then Christ is precious to you, and if you think little of him, then rest assured you have not a true and saving faith in him.

I. First, this is a positive fact, that UNTO BELIEVERS JESUS CHRIST IS PRECIOUS. In himself he is of inestimable preciousness, for he is very God of very God. He is, moreover, perfect man without sin. The precious gopher wood of his humanity is overlaid with the pure gold of his divinity. He is a mine of jewels and a mountain of gems. He is altogether lovely, but, alas! this blind world seeth not his beauty. The painted harlotries of that witch, Madame Bubble, the world *can* see, and all men wonder after her. This life, its joy, its lust, its gains, its honors,—these have beauty in the eye of unregenerate man, but in Christ he sees nothing which he can admire. He hears his name as a common word, and looks upon his cross as a thing in which he has no interest, neglects his gospel, despises his Word, and, perhaps, vents fierce spite upon his people. But not so the believer. The man who has been brought to know that Christ is the only foundation upon which the soul can build its eternal home, he who has been taught that Jesus Christ is the first and the last, the Alpha and the Omega, the author and the finisher of faith, thinks not lightly of Christ. He calls him all his salvation and all his desire; the only glorious and lovely one.

Now, this is a fact which has been proved in all ages of the world. Look at the beginning of Christ's appearance upon earth. Nay, we might go farther back, and mark how Christ was pre-

cious in prospect to those who lived before his incarnation; but I say, since he has come into the world, what abundant proofs have we that he is precious to his people! There were men found who were not unwilling to part with houses, and lands, and wife, and children, and country, and reputation, and honor, and wealth, nay, with life itself, for Christ's sake. Such was the charm that Christ had for ancient Christians, that if they must renounce their patrimony and their earthly wealth for his sake, they did it cheerfully and without a murmur. Nay, they could say, that what things were gain they counted but loss for Christ's sake, and did esteem them but as dross and dung if they could win Christ and be found in him.

We talk lightly of these things, but these were no mean sacrifices. For a man to leave the partner of his bosom, to be despised by her who ought to honor him, to be spit upon by his own children, to be driven out by his countrymen, and have his name mentioned as a hissing, and a reproach, and a bye-word; this is no easy matter to bear; and yet the Christians in the first ages took up this cross, and not only carried it patiently, but carried it joyfully; rejoicing in tribulations, if those tribulations fell upon them for Christ's sake and the gospel. Nay, more than this, Satan has been permitted to put forth his hand and touch Christ's people, not only in their goods and in their families, but in their bone and in their flesh. And mark how Christ's disciples have reckoned nothing to be a loss, so that they might win Christ. Stretched upon the rack, their strained nerves only made them sing the louder, as though they were harp strings, only put in tune when they were drawn out to their extreme length. They have been tortured with hot irons and with the pincers; their backs have been ploughed with scourges, but when have you found any of the true followers of Christ flinch in the hour of pain? They have borne all this, and challenged their persecutors to do more, and invent fresh arts and devices, fresh cruelties, and try them. Christ was so precious, that all the pain of the body could not make them deny him; and when at last they have been taken forth to a shameful death—let the axe and the block, let the cross of crucifixion, let the spear, let the fire and the stake, let the wild horse and the desert testify that the believer has

always been a man who would suffer all this and vastly more, but who would never renounce his confidence in Christ. Look at Polycarp before the lions, when he is brought into the midst of the assembly, and it is demanded of him that he will deny his God. Thousands of savage eyes look down upon him, and there he stands, a feeble man, alone in the arena, but he tells them that "he has known his Lord these many years, and he never did him a displeasure, and he will not deny him at the last." "To the lions!" they cry, "To the lions!" and the lions rush upon him and he is speedily devoured; but all this he would have borne at the mouths of a thousand lions, if he had a thousand lives, rather than he would have thought any thing amiss against the Majesty of Jesus of Nazareth. The whole history of the ancient church of Christ proves that Jesus has been an object of his peoples' highest veneration; that they set nothing in rivalry with him, but cheerfully and readily, without a murmur or a thought, gave up all for Jesus Christ, and rejoiced to do so.

And this is just as true to-day as it was then. If to-morrow the stake could be set in Smithfield, Christian people are prepared to be fuel for the flame. If once more the block were fixed on Tower hill, and the axe were brought forth from its hiding place, the heads of Christ's people would be cheerfully given, if they might but crown the head of Jesus and vindicate his cause. Those who declare that the ancient valor of the church is departed, know not what they say. The professing church may have lost its masculine vigor; the professors of this day may be but effeminate dwarfs, the offspring of glorious fathers; but the true church, the elect out of the professing church, the remnant whom God hath chosen, are as much in love with Jesus as his saints of yore, and are as ready to suffer and to die. We challenge hell and its incarnate representative, old Rome herself; let her build her dungeons, let her revive her inquisitions, let her once more get power in the state to cut, and mangle, and burn; we are still able to possess our souls in patience. We sometimes feel it were a good thing if persecuting days should come again, to try the church once more, and drive away her chaff, and make her like a goodly heap of wheat, all pure and clean. The rotten branches of the forest may tremble at the hurricane,

for they shall be swept away, but those that have sap within them tremble not. Our roots are intertwisted with the Rock of Ages, and the sap of Christ flows within us, and we are branches of the living vine, and nothing shall sever us from him. We know that not persecution, nor famine, nor nakedness, nor peril, nor the sword, shall divide us from the love of Christ, for in all these things we shall be as the church has been, more than conquerors through Him that loved us.

Does any one think that I exaggerate? Mark, then, if what I have said be not true, then Christ has no church at all; for the church that is not prepared to suffer, and bleed, and die for Christ, is not Christ's church. For what does he say, "He that loveth father and mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me."—St. Matthew, x. 37, 38. Albeit that Christ may not put us fully to the test, yet, if we be true, we must be ready for the ordeal; and if we be sincere, though we may tremble at the thought of it, we shall not tremble in the endurance of it. Many a man who says in his heart "I have not a martyr's faith," has really that noble virtue; and let him but once come to the push, and the world shall see the grace that has been hidden, rising like a giant from his slumbers. The faith which endures the relaxing of the world's sunshine, would endure the cutting frost of the world's persecution. We need not fear; if we be true to-day, we shall be true always.

This is not mere fiction, many are the proofs that Christ is still precious. Shall I tell you of the silent sufferers for Christ, who at this day suffer a martyrdom of which we hear not, but which is true and real? How many a young girl there is who follows Christ in the midst of an ungodly family; her father upbraids her, laughs at her, makes a scoff of her holiness, and pierces her through the heart with his sarcasm! Her brothers and her sisters call her "Puritan," "Methodist," and the like, and she is annoyed day by day with what the apostle calls, "Trial of cruel mockings." But she bears all this, and though the tear is sometimes forced by it from her eye, yet though she should weep blood, she would "resist unto blood, striving against sin." These sufferers are unrecorded, they are not put into a Book of Martyrs.

We have no Fox to write their martyrology, they have not the flesh-contenting knowledge that they shall be publicly honored; but they suffer alone and unheard of, still praying for those who laugh at them; bowing themselves before God on their knees in agony, not on account of the persecution, but in agony of soul for the persecutors themselves, that they may be saved. How many there are of such young men in workshops, employed in large establishments, who bend their knee at night by the bed side, in a large room, where there are many scoffers. Some of us have known this in our youthful days, and have had to endure it; but Christ is precious to the silent sufferings of his people; these unhonored martyrdoms prove that his church has not ceased to love him, nor to esteem him precious.

How many there are, too—how many thousands of unseen and unknown laborers for Christ, whose names cannot be here declared. They toil from morning till night all through the week, and the Sabbath day should be a day of rest to them; but they work more on the Sabbath day than on any other day. They are visiting the beds of the sick; their feet are weary, and nature says rest, but they go into the lowest dens and haunts of the city to speak to the ignorant, and endeavor to spread the name and honor of Jesus where it has not been known. There are many such who are working hard for Christ though the church scarce knows of it. And how many, too, there are who prove that they love Christ, by the continual liberality of their offerings. Many are the poor people I have discovered who have denied themselves of this and that, because they would serve Christ's cause. And many there are, too—every now and then we find them out—in the middle ranks of society, who give a hundred times as much to the cause of Christ as many of the rich and wealthy; and if you knew to what little trials they are put, to what shifts they are driven in order to serve Christ, you would say, "The man that can do this proves clearly that Christ is precious to him." And mark this, the reason why the church is not more laborious, not more generous in its gifts to the offertory of the Saviour, is just this, because the church of the day is not the church of Christ in its mass and bulk. There is a church of Christ within it, but the visible church, as it stands before you, is not to be considered

the church of Christ, we must pass it through the fire, and bring the third part through the flame; for this is the day when the dross is mingled with gold. How hath the much fine gold become dim; how hath the glory departed. Zion is under a cloud But mark, though you see it not, there is a church, a hidden church; an unmoving centre amidst the growing of profession, there is a life within this outward fungus of a growing Christianity; there is a life that is within, and to that hidden host, that chosen company, Christ is precious—they are proving it every day by their patient sufferings, by their laborious efforts, by their constant offerings to the church of Christ. "Unto you, therefore, which believe he is precious."

I will tell you one thing that proves—proves to a demonstration—that Christ is still precious to his people, and it is this: send one of Christ's people to hear the most noted preacher of the age, whoever that may be; he preaches a very learned sermon, very fine and magnificent, but there is not a word about Christ in that sermon. Suppose that to be the case, and the Christian man will go out and say, "I did not care a farthing for that man's discourse." Why? "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. I heard nothing about Christ." Send that man on the Sabbath morning to hear some hedge and ditch preacher, some one who cuts the king's English about never so badly, but who preaches Jesus Christ —you will see the tears rolling down that man's face, and when he comes out he will say, "I do not like that man's bad grammar, I do not like the many mistakes he has made, but, oh! it has done my heart good, for he spoke about Christ." That, after all, is the main thing for the Christian; he wants to hear about his Lord, and if he hears him magnified he will overlook a hundred faults. In fact, you will find that Christians are all agreed, that the best sermon is that which is fullest of Christ. They never like to hear a sermon unless there is something of Christ in it. A Welsh minister who was preaching last Sabbath at the chapel of my dear brother, Jonathan George, was saying, that Christ was the sum and substance of the gospel, and he broke out into this story:—A young man had been preaching in the presence of a venerable divine, and after he had done he went to the old minis-

ter, and said, "What do you think of my sermon?" "A very poor sermon, indeed," said he. "A poor sermon?" said the young man, "it took me a long time to study it." "Ay, no doubt of it." "Why, did you not think my explanation of the text a very good one?" "Oh, yes," said the old preacher, "very good, in deed." "Well, then, why do you say it is a poor sermon? Did'nt you think the metaphors were appropriate, and the arguments conclusive?" "Yes, they were very good as far as that goes, but still it was a very poor sermon." "Will you tell me why you think it a poor sermon?" "Because," said he, "there was no Christ in it." "Well," said the young man, "Christ was not in the text; we are not to be preaching Christ always, we must preach what is in the text." So the old man said, "Don't you know, young man, that from every town, and every village, and every little hamlet in England, wherever it may be, there is a road to London?" "Yes," said the young man. "Ah!" said the old divine, "and so from every text of Scripture, there is a road to the metropolis of the Scriptures, that is, Christ. And, my dear brother, your business is, when you get to a text, to say, 'Now what is the road to Christ?' and then preach a sermon, running along the road towards the great metropolis—Christ. And," said he, "I have never yet found a text that had not got a road to Christ in it, and if ever I do find one that has not got a road to Christ in it, I will make one; I will go over hedge and ditch but I would get at my Master, for the sermon cannot do any good unless there is a savor of Christ in it." Now, since you say amen to that, and declare that what you want to hear is Jesus Christ, the text is proved—"Unto you, therefore, which believe he is precious."

But if you want to try this again and prove it, go and see some of our sick and dying friends; go and talk to them about the Reform Bill, and they will look you in the face and say, "Oh, I am going from this time-state; it is a very small matter to me whether the Reform Bill will be carried or not." You will not find them much interested in that matter. Well, then, sit down and talk to them about the weather, and how the crops are getting on—"Well, it is a good prospect for wheat this year." They will say, "Ah! my harvest is ripening in glory." Intro-

duce the most interesting topic you can, and a believer, who is lying on the verge of eternity, will find nothing precious in it; but sit down by the bed-side of this man, and he may be very near gone, almost unconscious, and begin to talk about Jesus--mention that precious soul-reviving, soul-strengthening name Jesus, and you will see his eye glisten, and the blanched cheek will be flushed once more—"Ah," he will say, "Precious Jesus, that is the name which calms my fears, and bids my sorrows cease." You will see that you have given the man a strong tonic, and that his whole frame is braced up for the moment. Even when he dies, the thought of Jesus Christ and the prospect of seeing him shall make him living in the midst of death, strong in the midst of weakness, and fearless in the midst of trembling. And this proves, by the experience of God's people, that with those who believe in him, Christ is and ever must be a precious Christ.

II. The second thing is, WHY IS CHRIST PRECIOUS TO THE BELIEVER? I observe—and I shall run over those particulars very briefly, though they would be worthy of a long, long sermon—Jesus Christ is precious to the believer because he is intrinsically precious. But here let me take you through an exercise in grammar; here is an adjective, let us go through it. He is precious *positively;* he is more precious than any thing *comparatively;* he is most precious of all things, and most precious even if all things were rolled into one and put into competition with him; he is thus precious *superlatively.* Now, there are few things you can thus deal with. You say, a man is a good man, he is good positively, and you say he is a great deal better than many other people; he is good comparatively; but you can never truly say to any man that he is good superlatively, because there he would still be found short of perfection. But Christ is good positively, comparatively, and superlatively.

Is he not good *positively?* Election is a good thing—to be chosen of God, and precious; but we are elect in Christ Jesus. Adoption is a good thing; to be adopted into the family of God is a good thing—ah, but we are adopted in Christ Jesus and made joint-heirs with him. Pardon is a good thing—who will not say so? ay, but we are pardoned through the precious blood of

Jesus. Justification—is not that a noble thing, to be robed about with a perfect righteousness? ay, but we are justified in Jesus. To be preserved—is not that a precious thing? ay, but we are preserved in Christ Jesus, and kept by his power even to the end. Perfection—who shall say that this is not precious? Well, but we are perfect in Christ Jesus. Resurrection—is not that glori ous? We are risen with him. To ascend up on high—is not that precious? But he hath raised us up and made us sit together with him in heavenly places in Jesus Christ—so that Christ must be good positively, for he is all the best things in one. And if all these be good, surely *he* must be good in whom, and by whom, and to whom, and through whom are all these precious things.

But Christ is good *comparatively*. Bring any thing here and compare with him. One of the brightest jewels we can have is liberty. If I be not free, let me die. Put the halter to my neck but put not the fetter to my wrist—a free man I must be while I live. Will not the patriot say that he would give his blood to buy liberty, and think it a cheap price? Ay, but put liberty side by side with Christ, and I would wear the fetter for Christ and rejoice in the chain. The Apostle Paul himself could say, "I would that ye were altogether such as I am,"—and he might add, "except these bonds;" but though he accepted bonds for others, he did not accept them for himself, for he rejoiced in the chain, and counted it a mark of honor. Besides liberty, what a precious thing is life! "Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath, will he give for his life." But let a Christian—a true Christian, once have the choice between life and Christ,—"No," says he, "I can die, but I cannot deny; I can burn, but I cannot turn. I confess Christ and perish in the flame; but I cannot deny Christ, even though you exalt me to a throne." There would be no choice between the two. And then whatever earthly good there may be in comparison with Christ, the believer's testimony goes to prove that Christ is precious comparatively, for there is nothing that can be matched with him.

And then to go higher still—Christ is good superlatively. The superlative of all things is heaven, and if it could be possible to put Christ in competition with heaven, the Christian would not stop a moment in his choice; he would sooner be on earth

with Christ than be in heaven without him. Nay, I do not know whether he would not go almost as far as Rutherford, who said, "Lord, I would sooner be in hell with thee than in heaven without thee; for if I were in heaven without thee it would be a hell to me, and if I were in hell with thee it would be a heaven to me." We may put it so, and every Christian will subscribe to it. Now come, ye messengers of the world, and take on your shoulders all its treasures. Cæsar, pour out thy gold in one glittering pile; Cæsar, lay down thine honors here in one gaudy heap; here, Tiberius, bring all the joys of Capri's lust and vice; Solomon, bring here all the treasures of wisdom; Alexander, bring all thy triumphs; Napoleon, bring thy wide-spread empire and thy fame, put them all here, all that earth calls good; and now come, thou bleeding Lamb of God, thou marred and matchless Saviour, come here and tread these beneath thy feet, for what are all these compared with thee? I pour contempt on them all. Now am I dead to all the world, and all the world is dead to me. The whole realm of nature is small in comparison with thee, as a drop in the bucket when compared with a boundless ocean. Jesus Christ, then, is precious superlatively.

2. What more can we say? Still to answer this question again: Why is Christ precious to the believer more than to any other man? Why, it is the believer's *want* that makes Christ precious to him. That is one answer. We have been having a small shower of rain lately, and I dare say there are very few of you who felt grateful for it, since it gave you a little wetting coming here. But suppose that shower of rain could have fallen on the desert of Arabia, what a precious thing it would have been. Yea, every rain-drop would have been worth a pearl; and as for the shower, though it had rained gold dust, the rich deposit would not have been comparable to the flood when it descended from on high. But what is the reason that water is so precious there? Simply because it is so rare. Suppose I am in England; there is abundance of water, and I cannot sell it; water is so common, and therefore so cheap. But put a man in the desert and let the water-skin be dried up, let him come to the well wherein he expected to find water, and it has failed him; can you not conceive that that small drop of water might

be worth a king's ransom? Nay, that a man might hoard it up, and conceal it from all his comrades, because on that small drop of water depended his life? The way to prize water is to value it with a tongue like a firebrand, and with a mouth like an oven. Then can I estimate its value when I know its want. So with Christ. The worldling does not care for Christ, because he has never hungered and thirsted after him; but the Christian is athirst for Christ; he is in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is, and his heart and his flesh pant after God, yea for the living God; and as the thirsty soul dying, cries out water, water, water, so the Christian cries out Christ, Christ, Christ! This is the one thing needful for me, and if I have it not, this thirst must destroy me.

Mark, too, that the believer may be found in many aspects, and you will always find that his needs will endear Christ to him. Here is a man about to be tried for his life. Before he had committed the wrong, he used to say, "Lawyers, attorneys, pleaders, away with them, what is the good of them?" Now he has got into prison he thinks very differently. He says, "I wish I could get a good special pleader to plead my cause;" and he runs over the roll to see the best man to plead for him. At last he says, "Here is a man, if he could plead my cause I might hope to escape, but I have no money with which to engage him;" and he says to his wife—"Wife, we must sell our house;" or, "We must get money somehow, for I am on trial for my life, and I must have an advocate." And what will not a woman do to get an advocate for her husband? Why, she will pledge the last rag she has to get one. Now, does not the believer feel himself to be in just such a position? He is a poor sinner on trial for his life, and he wants an advocate; and every time he looks on Christ pleading his cause before the Father's throne, he says, "O what a precious Christ he is to a poor, sin-destroyed sinner, for he pleads his cause before the throne."

But suppose another case; that of a man drawn for a soldier. In such times men always look out for substitutes. I remember when the ballot was coming for the militia, how every man joined a substitute club in order that if he were drawn he might not go himself. Now suppose a man had been drawn, how valuable

would a substitute have been—for no man in his senses likes to be food for powder—he would rather a man without brains go and do such work as that, but as for him he estimates himself a too high a price. But suppose he is not only drawn for a soldier, but condemned to die. See yon poor wretch coming up the gallows stairs; some one whispers to him, "What would you give for a substitute now? What would you give for some one to come and bear this punishment?" See his eye rolls madness at the thought. "A substitute," says he, "I could not buy one for the whole world. Who would be a substitute for me, to swing into eternity amidst the yellings of a crowd?" But suppose—and we are only supposing what has actually occurred—suppose this man saw not only the gallows and the drop, but hell fire before him, and it were said to him, "You must burn in that for ever unless you find a substitute," would not that be a precious one? Now, mark, that is just our position. The Christian feels that hell is before him, if it were not that he has a glorious substitute. Jesus came forward, and said, "I will bear that punishment; pour hell on me, my Father, let me drink damnation dry;" and he did it; he endured all those pains, or an equivalent for them; he suffered in the rebel's stead; and now, through him the substitute, we are absolved and free. Oh, must not he be a precious Christ?

But think of Christ again, and then think of the believer's wants. I will try and run over a number of them. The believer is a silly sheep. What a precious thing is a shepherd, and how precious are green pastures and still waters. The believer is like a desolate woman. What a precious thing is a husband who shall provide for her, and shall console and cherish her. The believer is a pilgrim, and the hot sun beats on him. What a precious thing is the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. The believer is a bond-slave by nature. What a precious thing is the trump of jubilee, and the ransom-price that sets him free. The believer, by nature, is a sinking, drowning man. How precious to him is that plank of free-grace, the cross of Christ, on which he puts his poor trembling hand and secures glory. But what more shall I say? Time would fail me to tell of all the wants of the believer, and of the all-abounding and

ever-flowing streams of love that flow from Christ, the fountain that fills the believer to the brim. O say, ye children of God, is he not, while ye are in these lowlands of want and suffering, inconceivably, unutterably, superlatively precious to you?

3. But once more. Look at the believer not only in his wants, but in his highest earthly state. The believer is a man that was once blind and now sees. And what a precious thing is light to a man that sees. If I, as a believer, have an eye, how much I need the sun to shine. If I have no light my eye becomes a torture, and I might as well have been blind. And when Christ gives sight to the blind he makes his people a seeing people. It is then that they find what a precious thing is the sight, and how pleasant a thing it is for a man to behold the sun. The believer is a man that is quickened. A dead corpse wants no clothing, for it feels no cold. Let a man once be quickened and he finds himself naked, and wants clothing. From the very fact that the Christian is a quickened man, he values the robe of righteousness that is put about him. Christ touches his people's ears and opens them; but it were better for man to be deaf than to hear for ever doleful groans and hissings. But such must he have been, ever hearing it if it were not for Christ playing sweet music to him every day, and pouring streams of melody into his ears through his promises. Yes, I say, the very new-born powers of the Christian would be very channels for misery if it were not for Christ. Even in his highest estate the Christian must feel that Christ is necessary unto him, and then he must conclude that Christ is precious to him.

But, believer, how precious is Christ to thee in the hour of conviction of sin, when he says, "Thy sins, which are many, are all forgiven thee." How precious to thee in the hour of sickness, when he comes to thee and says, "I will make all thy bed n thy sickness." How precious to thee in the day of trial, when he says, "All things work together for thy good." How precious when friends are buried, for he says, "I am the resurrection and the life." How precious in thy gray old age, "even in old age I am with thee, and to hoary hairs will I carry you." How precious in the lone chamber of death, for "I will fear no evil, thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff comfort me." But,

last of all, how precious will Christ be when we see him as he is. All we know of Christ here is as nothing compared with what we shall know hereafter. Believer, when thou seest Christ's face, now, thou only seest it through a vail—Christ is so glorious, that, like Moses, he is compelled to put a veil upon his face, for his poor people, while they are here, are so feeble that they could not behold him face to face. And if he be lovely here, when he is marred and spit upon, how lovely must he be when he is adored and worshipped. If he is precious on his cross, how much more precious when he sits on his throne. If I can weep before him and love him, and live to him, when I see him as the despised man of Nazareth, oh, how shall my spirit be knit to him, how shall my heart be absorbed with love to him, when I see his face and behold his crown of glory, when I mark the harpings of the never-ceasing harpers who harp his praise. Wait awhile, Christian. If he is precious to the believer now, when faith is turned to sight he will be more precious still. Go out of this hall, and cry, "O Lord Jesus, I must love thee, I must serve thee better, I must live for thee; I must be ready to die for thee—for

> 'Thou art precious to my soul,
> My transport and my trust.'"

This brings me to conclude—and here I want your solemn and earnest attention while each one for himself shall answer this question—my hearer, is Christ precious to you? My young brother, you of the same age as myself, is Jesus precious to you in your youth? Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? only by taking heed thereto according to Christ's word, and by walking in his footsteps. Ye men and women of middle age, is Christ precious to you? Remember that this world is but a dream, and if you have not something more satisfactory than that, you will die disappointed, even though you succeed beyond your highest wishes. And ye gray-headed men, who are going tottering to your graves, whose life is like a candle-snuff, almost expiring, like a lamp whose oil is spent. Is Christ precious to you, ye with the bald head, and with the hoary lock, is Jesus precious to your soul? Remember, on your answer to this question depends your condition. *You* believe, if he is pre-

cious to you, but if he is not precious, then you are not believers, and you are condemned already because you believe not on the Son of God. Now, which is it? Oh, methinks some of you feel as if you could spring from your seats, and say, "Yes, he is precious to me, I cannot deny it." Once there was a good minister who was catechizing his class, and he said to the young people, "The question which I am about to ask is such that I want none of you to answer but those who can answer from your heart." The congregation was gathered together and he put this question to them concerning Christ—"Suppose Christ was here, and should say, 'Lovest thou me?' what would be your reply?" He looked around, and glanced upon all the young men and the young women, and said, "Jesus speaks to you the first time, and says, 'Lovest thou me?'" He speaks a second time, and he says, 'Lovest thou me?'" There was a solemn pause, and no one answered; and the congregation looked at the class, and at last the minister said once more, "Jesus speaks by me a third time, and says, 'Lovest thou me?" Up rose a young woman, who could keep her seat no longer, and, bursting into tears, said, "Yea, Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee." Now, how many are there here who could say that? Could not you now, if this were the time —although you might be bashful in the midst of so many— could you not, if Christ asked you the question, boldly say, though in the midst of enemies—"Yea, Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee." Well, if you can give such an answer as that, go home and pray that others may be brought to love him, for you yourselves are saved; but if you are compelled to be silent to such a question as that, O may God lead you to seek Christ, may you, too, be driven to the cross, may you there see his dear bleeding wounds, may you behold his open side, and, falling at his feet, may you say "I trust thee, I rely upon thee, I depend upon thee," and he will say, "I have saved thee;" and then will you spring to your feet, and say, "Lord, I love thee, because thou hast first loved me." May such be the end of this sermon, and to God be all the glory.

SERMON XXIV.

THE MEEK AND LOWLY ONE.

"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."—MATTHEW, xi. 28–30.

THE single sentence which I have selected for my text consists of these words:—"I am meek and lowly in heart." These words might be taken to have three distinct bearings upon the context. They may be regarded as being the *lesson to be taught:* "Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart." One great lesson of the gospel is to teach us to be meek—to put away our high and angry spirits, and to make us lowly in heart. Peradventure, this is the meaning of the passage—that if we will but come to Christ's school, he will teach us the hardest of all lessons,—how to be meek and lowly in heart. Again; other expositors might consider this sentence to signify, that is *the only Spirit in which a man can learn of Jesus*,—the Spirit which is necessary if we would become Christ's scholars. We can learn nothing, even of Christ himself, while we hold our heads up with pride, or exalt ourselves with self-confidence. We must be meek and lowly in heart, otherwise we are totally unfit to be taught by Christ Empty vessels may be filled; but vessels that are full already can receive no more. The man who knows his own emptiness can receive abundance of knowledge, and wisdom, and grace, from Christ; but he who glories in himself, is not in a fit condition to receive any thing from God. I have no doubt that both of these interpretations are true, and might be borne out by the connection. It is the *lesson* of Christ's school—it is the *spirit* of Christ's

disciples. But I choose, rather, this morning, to regard these words as being *a commendation of the Teacher himself*. "Come unto *me* and learn; for I am meek and lowly in heart." As much as to say, "I can teach, and you will not find it hard to learn of me." In fact, the subject of this morning's discourse is briefly this: the gentle, lovely character of Christ should be a high and powerful inducement to sinners to come to Christ. I intend so to use it: first of all, noticing *the two qualities* which Christ here claims for himself. He is "*meek;*" and then he is "*lowly in heart;*" and after we have observed these two things, I shall come to *push the conclusion home*. Come unto him, all ye that are laboring and are heavy laden; come unto him, and take his yoke upon you; for he is meek and lowly in heart.

I. First, then, I am to consider THE FIRST QUALITY WHICH JESUS CHRIST CLAIMS. He declares that he is "MEEK."

Christ is no egotist, he takes no praise to himself. If ever he utters a word in self-commendation, it is not with that object; it is with another design, namely, that he may entice souls to come to him. Here, in order to exhibit this meekness, I shall have to speak of him in several ways.

1. First, Christ is meek, as opposed to the *ferocity* of spirit manifested by zealots and bigots. Take, for a prominent example of the opposite of meekness, the false prophet Mahomet. The strength of his cause lies in the fact, that he is *not* meek. He presents himself before those whom he claims as disciples, and says, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am neither meek, nor lowly in heart; I will have no patience with you; there is creed, or there is the scimitar—death or conversion, whichever you please." The moment the Mahometan religion withdrew that very forcible argument of decapitation or impalement, it stayed in its work of conversion, and never progressed; for the very strength of the false prophet lies in the absence of any meekness. How opposite this is to Christ! Although he hath a right to demand man's love and man's faith, yet he comes not into the world to demand it with fire and sword. His might is under persuasion; his strength is quiet forbearance, and patient endurance; his mightiest force is the sweet attraction of compassion and love. He knoweth nothing of the ferocious hosts of

Mahomet; he bids none of us draw our sword to propagate the faith, but saith, "Put up thy sword into its scabbard; they that take the sword shall perish by the sword." "My kingdom is not of this world, else might my servants fight." Nay, Mahomet is not the only instance we can bring; but even good men are subject to the like mistakes. They imagine that religion is to be spread by terror and thunder. Look at John himself, the most lovely of all the disciples: he would call fire from heaven on a village of Samaritans, because they rejected Christ. Hark to his hot inquiry,—"Wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" Christ's disciples were to him something like the sons of Zeruiah to David; for when Shimei mocked David, the sons of Zeruiah said, "Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? let me go over, I pray thee, and take off his head." But David meekly said, "What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah?"—and put them aside. He had something of the spirit of his Master; he knew that *his* honor was not then to be defended by sword or spear. O blessed Jesus! thou hast no fury in thy spirit; when men rejected thee thou didst not draw the sword to smite, but, on the contrary, thou didst yield thine eyes to weeping. Behold your Saviour, disciples, and see whether he was not meek. He had long preached in Jerusalem without effect, and at last he knew that they were ready to put him to death: but what said he, as, standing on the top of the hill, he beheld the city that had rejected his gospel? Did he invoke a curse upon it? Did he suffer one word of anger to leap from his burning heart? Ah! no; there were flames, but they were those of love; there were scalding drops, but they were those of grief. He beheld the city, and wept over it, and said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." And for a further proof of the absence of all uncharitableness, observe that, even when they drove the nails into his blessed hands, yet he had no curse to breathe upon them, but his dying exclamation was, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." O sinners! see what a Christ it is that we bid you serve. No angry bigot, no fierce warrior, claiming your

unwilling faith: he is a tender Jesus. Your rejection of him has made his bowels yearn over you; and though you abhor his gospel, he has pleaded for you, saying, "Let him alone yet another year, till I dig about him; peradventure he may yet bring forth fruit." What a patient master is he! Oh! will you not serve him!

2. But the idea is not brought out fully, unless we take another sense. There *is* a sternness which cannot be condemned. A Christian man will often feel himself called to bear most solemn and stern witness against the error of his times, but Christ's mission, although it certainly did testify against the sin of his times, yet had a far greater reference to the salvation of the souls of men. To show the idea that I have in my own mind, which I have not yet brought out, I must picture Elijah. What a man was he! His mission was to be the bold unflinching advocate of the right, and to bear a constant testimony against the wickedness of his age. And how boldly did he speak! Look at him: how grand the picture! Can you not conceive him on that memorable day, when he met Ahab, and Ahab said, "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" Do you mark that mighty answer which Elijah gave him, while the king trembles at his words. Or, better still, can you picture the scene when Elijah said, "Take you two bullocks, ye priests, and build an altar, and see this day, whether God be God or Baal be God." Do you see him as he mocks the worshippers of Baal, and with a biting irony, says to them, "Cry aloud, for he is a god." And do you see him in the last grand scene, when the fire has come down from heaven, and consumed the sacrifice, and licked up the water, and burned the altar? Do you hear him cry, "Take the prophets of Baal; let not one escape?" Can you see him in his might hewing them in pieces by the brook, and making their flesh a feast for the fowls of heaven? Now, you cannot picture Christ in the same position. He had the stern qualities of Elijah, but he kept them, as it were, behind, like sleeping thunder, that must not as yet waken and lift up its voice. There were some rumblings of the tempest, it is true, when he spoke so sternly to the Sadducees, and Scribes, and Pharisees; those woes were like murmurings of a distant storm, but it *was* a distant storm; whereas, Elijah lived in the midst of

the whirlwind itself, and was no still small voice, but was as the very fire of God, and like the chariot in which he mounted to heaven—fit chariot for such a fiery man! Christ here stands in marked contrast. Picture him in somewhat a like position to Elijah with Ahab. There is Jesus left alone with an adulterous woman. She has been taken in the very fact Her accusers are present, ready to bear witness against her. By a simple sentence he empties the room of every witness; convicted by their conscience they all retire. And now what does Christ say? The woman might have lifted her eyes, and have looked at him, and said, "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?"—for she might have regarded Christ as the enemy of so base a sin as that which she had committed against her marriage bed. But instead thereof, Jesus said, "Doth no man condemn thee? Neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more." Oh, how different from the sternness of Elijah! Sinners! if I had to preach Elijah as your Saviour, I should feel that I had a hard task, for you might throw it in my teeth—"Shall we come to Elijah? He will call fire from heaven on us, as he did upon the captains and their fifties. Shall we come to Elijah? Surely he will slay us, for we have been like the prophets of Baal?" Nay, sinners; but I bid you come to Christ. Come to him, who, although he hated sin more than Elijah could do, yet, nevertheless, loved the sinner—who, though he would not spare iniquity, yet spares the transgressors, and has no words but those of love and mercy, and peace and comfort, for those of you who will now come and put your trust in him.

I must put in a word here by way of caveat. I am very far from imputing, for a single moment, any blame to Elijah. He was quite right. None but Elijah could have fulfilled the mission which his Master gave him. He needed to be all he was, and certainly not less stern; but Elijah was not sent to be a Saviour; he was quite unfit for that. He was sent to administer a stern rebuke. He was God's iron-tongue of threatening, not God's silver tongue of mercy. Now, Jesus is the silver tongue of grace. Sinners! hear the sweet bells ringing, as Jesus now invites you to come unto him. "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden; for I am not stern, I am not harsh, I

am no fire-killing Elijah; I am the meek, tender, lowly-hearted Jesus."

3. Christ is meek in heart. To exhibit this quality in another light, call to your minds Moses. Moses was the meekest of men; and yet Christ far excels Moses in his meekness. Around Moses there seems to be a hedge, a ring of fire. The character of Moses is like Mount Sinai; it hath bounds set about it, so tha one cannot draw near unto him. Moses was not an approachabl person, he was quiet and meek, and tender, but there was a secret majesty about the King in Jeshurun that hedged his path, so that we cannot imagine the people making themselves familiar with him. Whoever read of Moses sitting down upon a well, and talking to a harlot like the woman of Samaria? Whoever heard a story of a Magdalene washing the feet of Moses? Can ye conceive Moses eating bread with a sinner, or passing under a sycamore tree, and calling Zaccheus, the thievish publican, and bidding him come down? There is a kind of stately majesty in Moses, no mere affectation of standing alone, but a loneliness of superior worth. Men looked up to him as to some cloud-capped moun tain, and despaired of being able to enter into the lofty circle, within which they might have communed with him. Moses always had in spirit what he once had in visible token; he had a glory about his brow, and before he could converse with men he must wear a veil, for they could not bear to look upon the face of Moses. But how different is Jesus! He is a man among men; wherever he goes no one is afraid to speak to him. You scarcely meet with any one who dares not approach him. There is a poor woman, it is true, who hath the flux, and she fears to come near him, because she is ceremonially unclean; but even she can come behind him in the press, and touch the hem of his garment, and virtue goeth out of him. Nobody was afraid of Jesus. The mothers brought their little babes to him: whoever heard of their doing that to Moses? Did ever babe get a blessing of Moses? But Jesus was all meekness—the approachable man, feasting with the wedding guests, sitting down with sinners, conversing with the unholy and the unclean, touching the leper, and making himself at home with all men. Sinners! this is the one we invite you to—this homely man, Christ. Not to Moses, for

you might say, "He hath horns of light, and how shall I draw near to his majesty! he is bright perfection—the very lightnings of Sinai rest upon his brow." But sinners, ye cannot say that of Christ. He is as holy as Moses—as great, and far greater; but he is still so homely that ye may come to him. Little children, ye may put your trust in him. Ye may say your little prayer—

> "Gentle Jesus, meek and mild,
> Look on me, a little child:
> Pity my simplicity,
> Suffer me to come to thee."

He will not cast you away, or think you have intruded on him. Ye harlots, ye drunkards, ye feasters, ye wedding guests, ye may all come; "This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them." He is "meek and lowly in heart." That gives, I think, a still fuller and broader sense to the term, "meek."

4. But yet, to push the term a little further. Christ on earth was a king; but there was nothing about him of the exclusive pomp of kings, which excludes the common people from their society. Look at the Eastern king Ahasuerus, sitting on his throne. He is considered by his people as a superior being. None may come in unto the king, unless he is called for. Should he venture to pass the circle, the guards will slay him, unless the king stretches out the golden sceptre. Even Esther, his beloved wife, is afraid to draw near, and must put her life in her hand, if she comes into the presence of the king uncalled. Christ is a king; but where his pomp? Where the Janitor that keeps his door, and thrusts away the poor? Where the soldiers that ride on either side of his chariot to screen the monarch from the gaze of poverty? See thy King, O Sion! He comes, he comes in royal pomp! Behold, Judah, behold thy King cometh! But how cometh he? "Meek and lowly, riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass." And who are his attendants? See, the young children, boys and girls! They cry, "Hosannah! Hosannah! Hosannah!" And who are they that wait upon him? His poor disciples. They pull the branches from the trees; they cast their garments in the street, and there he rideth on—Judah's royal King. His courtiers are the poor; his pomp is that tribute

which grateful hearts delight to offer. O sinners, will you not come to Christ? There is nothing in him to keep you back. You need not say, like Esther did of old, "I will go in unto the king; if I perish I perish." Come, and welcome! Come, and welcome! Christ is more ready to receive you than you are to come to him. Come to the King! "What is thy petition, and what is thy request? It shall be done unto thee." If thou stayest away, it is not because he shuts the door, it is because thou wilt not come. Come, filthy, naked, ragged, poor, lost, ruined, come, just as thou art. Here he stands, like a fountain freely opened for all comers. "Whosoever will, let him come and take of the waters of life freely."

5. I will give you but one more picture to set forth the meekness of Christ, and I think I shall not have completed the story without it. The absence of all selfishness from the character of Christ, makes one ingredient of this precious quality of his meekness. You remember the history of Jonah. Jonah is sent to prophecy against Nineveh; but he is selfish. He will not go for he shall get no honor by it. He does not want to go so long a journey for so small a price. He will not go. He will take a ship and go to Tarshish. He is thrown out into the sea, swallowed by a fish, and vomited by it upon dry land. He goes away to Nineveh, and not wanting courage, he goes through its streets, crying, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." That one man's earnest cry moves the city from one end to the other. The king proclaims a fast; the people mourn in sackcloth and confess their sins. God sends them tidings of mercy, and they are spared. But what will Jonah do? Oh, tell it not, ye heavens; let none hear it—that ever a prophet of God could do the like! He sits himself down, and he is angry with God. And why his anger? Because, says he, "God has not destroyed that city." If God had destroyed the city he would have shouted over the ruins, because his reputation would have been safe; but now that the city is saved, and his own reputation for a prophet tarnished, he must needs sit down in anger. But Christ is the very reverse of this. Sinners! Christ does thunder at you sometimes, but it is always that he may bring you to repentance. He does take Jonah's cry, and utter it far more

mightily than Jonah could; he does warn you that there is a fire that never can be quenched, and a worm that dieth not; but if you turn to him, will he sit down and be angry? Oh! no; methinks I see him. There you come, poor prodigals; your father falls upon your neck and kisses you, and you are accepted, and a feast is made. Here comes the elder brother, Jesus. What does he say? Is he angry because you are saved? Ah! no! "My Father," saith he, "my younger brothers have all come home, and I love them; they shall share my honors; they shall sit upon my throne, they shall share my heaven." "Where I am, there they shall be also." I will take them into union with myself, and as they have wasted *their* inheritance, all that I have shall be theirs for ever. Oh! come home, prodigal, there is no angry brother and no angry father. Come back, come back, my brother, my wandering brother, I invite thee; for Jesus is rejoiced to receive thee. Do you not see, then, that the meekness of Christ is a sweet and blessed reason why we should come to him?

II. The second virtue which Christ claims for himself is LOWLINESS OF HEART.

When I looked this passage out in the original, I half wondered how it was that Christ found such a sweet word for the expression of his meaning; for the Greeks do not know much about humility, and they have not a very good word to set forth this idea of lowliness of heart. I find that if this passage stood in another connection, the word might even be interpreted "degraded, debased," for the Greeks thought that if a man was humble he degraded himself—that if he stooped, he debased himself right out. "Well," says Christ, "if you think so, so be it," and he takes the word. The word means, "near the ground." So is Christ's heart. We cannot be so low that he will not stoop to reach us. I would just set out the lowliness of Christ's heart in this way. Christ is "lowly in heart;" that is he is willing to receive *the poorest* sinner in the world. The pharisee thought that the keeper of the gate of heaven would admit only the rich, and not the poor. Mark Christ's teaching. There were two came to the gate once upon a time; one was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day; he

knocked, and thought that full sure he must enter; but "in hell he lift up his eyes being in torments." There came another, borne on angels' wings. It was a beggar, whose many sores the dogs had licked; and he had not so much as to knock at the gate, for the angels carried him straight away into the very centre of paradise, and laid him in Abraham's bosom. Jesus Christ is willing to receive beggars into his bosom. Kings, you know, condescend when they permit even the rich to be presented to them, and the kissing of a monarch's hand is something very wonderful indeed; but to have the kisses of *his* lips, who is the King of kings, is no uncommon thing for men that are shivering in rags, or that are sick upon miserable beds in dingy attics. Christ is "lowly in heart;" he goes with what men call the vulgar herd; he hath nothing of affected royalty about him—he hath a nobler royalty than that, the royalty that is too proud to think any thing of a stoop, that can only measure itself by its own intrinsic excellence, and not by its official standing. He receiveth the lowest, the meanest, the vilest, for he is "lowly in heart." If I have among my congregation some of the poorest of the poor, let them come away to Christ, and let them not imagine that their poverty need keep them back. I am always delighted when I see a number of women here from the neighboring workhouse. I bless God that there are some in the workhouse that are willing to come; and, though they have sometimes been put to a little inconvenience by so doing, yet I have known them sooner give up their dinner than give up coming to hear the Word. God bless the workhouse women, and may they be led to Christ, for he is meek and lowly in heart, and will not reject them. I must confess, also, I like to see a smock frock here and there in the midst of the congregation. Oh! what a mercy, that in the palace of the Great King there shall be found these workmen, these blouses. They shall be made partakers of the kingdom of God. He makes no difference between prince and pauper; he takes men to heaven just as readily from the workhouse as from the palace.

Further, this lowliness of heart in Christ leads him to receive the most *ignorant* as well as the learned to himself. I know that sometimes poor ignorant people get a notion in their heads that

they cannot be saved, because they cannot read and do not know much. I have sometimes, especially in country villages, received this answer, when I have been asking any thing about personal religion: "Well, you know, sir, I never had any learning." Oh! but, ye unlearned, is this a reason why ye should stay away from him who is lowly in heart? It was said of an old Greek philosopher, that he wrote over his door, "None but the learned may enter here." But Christ, on the contrary, writes over his door, "He that is simple let him turn in hither." There are many great men with long handles to their names who know little of the gospel, while some of the poor unlettered ones spell out the whole secret, and become perfect masters in divinity. If they had degrees who deserve them, diplomas should often be transferred, and given to those who hold the plough handle or work at the carpenter's bench; for there is often more divinity in the little finger of a ploughman than there is in the whole body of some of our modern divines. "Don't they understand divinity?" you say. Yes, in the letter of it; but, as to the spirit and life of it, D. D. often means DOUBLY DESTITUTE.

The lowliness of Christ may be clearly seen in yet another point of view. He is not only willing to receive the poor, and to receive the ignorant, but he is also ever ready to receive men, despite the vileness of their characters. Some teachers can stoop, and freely too, to both poor and ignorant; but they cannot stoop to the wicked. I think we have all felt a difficulty here. "However poor a man may be, or however little he knows," you say, "I don't mind talking with him, and trying to do him good; but I cannot talk with a man who is a rogue or a vagabond, or with a woman who has lost her character." I know you cannot; there are a great many things Christ did which we cannot do. We, who are the servants of Christ, have attempted to draw a line where duty has its bound. Like the domestic servant in some lordly mansion who stoops not to menial employment. We are above our work. We are so fastidious, that we cannot go after the chief of sinners, and the vilest of the vile. Not so, Christ. "He receiveth sinners and *eateth* with them." He in the days of his flesh, became familiar with the outcasts. He sought them out that he might save them;

he entered their homes; he found his way into the slums, like some diligent officer of the police; he was willing to lodge where they lodged, eat at their table, and associate with their class to find them out. His mission was to *seek* as well as to save. Oh, I see him stand, with arms wide open! Will that thief, who is justly executed for his crimes, be recognized by him? Yes, he will. There, with his arms outstretched, he hangs; the thief lies as it were to his bosom, and Jesus gives him a most blessed embrace. "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." Christ has received the thief with open heart and open arms too. And here is Mary. Do you see her? She is washing the feet of Jesus. Why, she is a bad character, one of the worst women on the town. What will Christ say? Say! Why, hear how he speaks to Simon, the pious, reputable Pharisee. Saith he, after putting the parable concerning the two debtors, "which of them shall love him most?"—and then he explains that this woman hath had much forgiven, and therefore she loves him much. "Thy sins, which are many, are all forgiven," saith he, and she goes her way in peace. There are many men you and I would not demean ourselves to notice, that Christ will take to heaven at last; for he is "lowly in heart." He takes the base, the vilest, the scum, the offscouring, the filth, the garbage of the world, and out of such stuff and matter as that, he buildeth up a holy temple, and gathereth to himself trophies for his honor and praise.

And further, while I speak of the lowliness of Christ's heart, I must remark another thing. Perhaps one is saying here, "Oh! sir, it is not what I have been, as to my conduct, that keeps me back from Christ; but I feel that what I am as to my nature restrains me; I am such a dolt, I shall never learn in his school. I am such a hard-hearted one, he will never melt me, and if he does save me, I shall never be worth his having. Yes, but Christ is 'lowly in heart." There are some great goldsmiths that of course can only think of preparing and polishing the choicest diamonds; but Jesus Christ polishes a common pebble, and makes a jewel of it. Goldsmiths make their precious treasures out of precious materials; Christ makes his precious things out of dross. He begins always with bad material. The palace of our king is not made of cedar wood, as Solomon's, or if it be of wood, certainly

he has chosen the knottiest trees and the knottiest planks wherewith to build his habitation. He has taken those to be his scholars who were the greatest dunces; so amazing is the lowliness of Christ's heart. He sits down on the form with us to teach us the A B C of repentance, and if we are slow to learn it he begins again, and takes us through our alphabet, and if we forget it he will often teach us our letters over again; for though he is able to teach the angels, yet he condescends to instruct babes, and as we go step by step in heavenly literature, Christ is not above teaching the elements. He teaches not only in the university, and the grammar-school, where high attainments are valued, but he teaches in the day-school, where the elements and first principles are to be instilled. It is he who teaches the sinner what *sinner* means in deep conviction, and what faith means in holy assurance. It is not only he who takes us to Pisgah, and bids us view the promised land, but it is he also who takes us to Calvary, and makes us learn that simplest of all things, the sacred writing of the cross. He, if I may use such a phrase, will not only teach us how to write the highly ornamental writing of the Eden Paradise, the richly gilded, illuminated letters of communion and fellowship, but he teaches us how to make the pot-hooks and hangers of repentance and faith. He begins at the beginning; for he is "meek and lowly in heart." Come, then, ye dolts, ye fools; come, ye sinners, ye vile ones; come, ye dullest of all scholars, ye poor, ye illiterate, ye who are rejected and despised of men; come to him who was rejected and despised as well as you. Come and welcome! Christ bids you come!

> "Let not conscience make you linger;
> Nor of fitness fondly dream;
> All the *fitness* he requireth,
> Is to feel your need of him:
> This he gives you;
> 'Tis his Spirit's rising beam."

Come, poor sinners! come to a gentle Saviour! and you shall never regret that you came to him.

III. Having thus spoken on the two marks of our Lord's character, I propose to conclude, if God shall help me, by knock

ing home the nail, by driving in the wedge, and pressing upon you a conclusion from these arguments. The conclusion of the whole matter is this, since Christ is "meek and lowly in heart," sinners come to him.

Come to him, then, first, whoever you may be, for he is "meek and lowly in heart." When a man has done any thing wrong, and wants a help through his difficulty, if about to employ some counsel to plead for him in a court of law, he might say, "Oh don't engage Mr. So-and-so for me; I hear he is a very hard-hearted man; I should not like to tell him what I have done, and entrust my case in his hands. Send for Mr. So-and-so; I have heard that he is very kind and gentle; let him come and hear my case, and let him conduct the pleadings for me." Sinner! you are sinful, but Christ is tender-hearted. Speed thy way to Christ's private chamber,—your own closet of prayer. Tell him all you have done; he will not upbraid you: confess all your sins; he will not chide you. Tell him all your follies; he will not be angry with you. Commit your case to him, and with a sweet smile he will say, "I have cast thy sins behind my back; thou hast come to reason with me; I will discover to thee a matter of faith which excels all reason,—'Though thy sins be as scarlet, they shall be as wool; though they be red like crimson, they shall be whiter than snow.'" Come to Christ, then, sinful ones, because he is "meek and lowly in heart," and he can bear with the narrative of your offences. "But, sir, I am very timid, and I dare not go." Ah, but however timid you may be, you need not be afraid of him. He knows your timidity, and he will meet you with a smile, and say, "Fear not. Be of good cheer. Tell me thy sin, put thy trust in me, and thou shalt even yet rejoice to know my power to save. Come now," saith he, "come to me at once. Linger no longer. *I* do not strive nor cry, nor cause my voice to be heard in the streets. A bruised reed I will not break, the smoking flax I will not quench; but I will bring forth judgment unto victory." Come then, ye timid ones to Christ, for he is meek and lowly in heart. "Oh," says one, "but I am despairing; I have been so long under a sense of sin I cannot go to Christ." Poor soul! he is so meek and lowly, that, despairing though thou mayest be, take courage

now; though it be like a forlorn hope to thee, yet go to him. Say, in the words of the hymn—

"I'll to the gracious King approach,
Whose sceptre pardon gives;
Perhaps he may command my touch,
And then the suppliant lives.

I can but perish if I go;
I am resolved to try;
For if I stay away, I know
I must for ever die."

And you may add this comfortable reflection—

"But if I die with mercy sought,
When I the king have tried,
This were to die (delightful thought!)
As sinner never died."

Come to him, then, timid and despairing; for he is "meek and lowly in heart." First, he bids thee confess. What a sweet confessor! Put thy lip to his ear, and tell him all. He is "meek and lowly in heart." Fear not. None of thy sins can move him to anger, if thou dost but confess them. If thou keepest them in thy heart, they shall be like a slumbering volcano; and a furnace of destruction thou shalt find even to the uttermost by-and-bye. But confess thy sins; tell them all; he is "meek and lowly in heart." Happy confession! when we have such a confessor.

Again, he bids thee trust him; and canst thou not trust him? He is "meek and lowly in heart." Sinner! put confidence in Christ. There never was such a tender heart as his, never such a compassionate face. Look him in the face, poor soul, as thou seest him dying on the tree, and say, is not that a face that any man might trust! Look at him! Canst thou doubt him? Wilt thou withhold thy cause from such a Redeemer as this? No, Jesus! thou art so generous, so good, so kind. Take thou my cause in hand. Just as I am, I come to thee. Save me, I beseech thee, for I put my trust in thee.

And then Jesus not only bids you confess and believe, but he

bids you afterwards serve him. And sure, sinners, this should be a reason why you should do it, that he is so "meek and lowly in heart." It is said, "Good masters make good servants." What good servants you and I ought to be, for what a good Master we have! Never an ill word doth he say to us. If some times he pointeth out any thing we have done amiss, it is only for our good. Not for his profit doth he chasten, but for ours Sinner! I ask thee not to serve the god of this world—that foul fiend who shall destroy thee after all thy service. The devil is thy master now, and ye have heard the wages he bestows. But come and serve Christ, the meek and lowly one, who will give thee good cheer while thou art serving him, and give thee a blessed reward when thy work is done.

And now, best of all, sinners! come to Christ. Come to him in all his offices, for he is "meek and lowly in heart." Sinner! thou art sick—Christ is a physician. If men have broken a bone, and they are about to have a surgeon fetched, they say, "Oh! he a feeling, tender-hearted man?" For there is many an army surgeon that takes off a leg, and never thinks of the pain he is giving. "Is he a kind man?" says the poor sufferer, when he is about to be strapped down upon the table. Ah! poor sufferer, Christ will heal thy broken bones, and he will do it with downy fingers. Never was there so light a touch as this heavenly surgeon has. 'Tis pleasure even to be wounded by him, much more to be healed. Oh, what balm is that he gives to the poor bleeding heart! Fear not; there was never such a physician as his. If he give thee now and then a bitter pill and a sour draught, yet he will give thee such honied words and such sweet promises therewith, that thou shalt swallow it all up without murmuring. Nay, if he be with thee, thou canst even swallow up death in victory; and never know that thou hast died because victory hath taken the bitter taste away.

Sinner! thou art not only sick, and therefore bidden to come to him, but thou art moreover in debt, and he offers now to pay thy debts, and to discharge them in full. Come, come to him, for he is not harsh. Some men, when they do mean to let a debtor off, first have him in their office, and give him as much as they can of the most severe rebukes;—"You rogue, you! how dare you

get in my debt, when you knew you could not pay? You have brought a deal of trouble on yourself; you have ruined your family," and so forth; and the good man gives him some very sound admonition, and very right too; till at length he says, "I'll let you off this time; come, now, I forgive you, and I hope you will never do so again." But Christ is even better than this. "There is all your debt," he says, "I have nailed it to the cross; sinner, I forgive thee all," and not one accusing word comes from his lips. Come, then, to him.

I fear I have spoilt my master in the painting, something like the artist who had to depict some fair damsel, and he so misrepresented her features that she lost her reputation for beauty. I have sometimes feared lest I should do the same, and so distort the face of Christ, and so fail of giving the true likeness of his character that you would not love him. Oh, could you see him! If he could stand here for one moment, and tell you that he was meek and lowly in heart. Oh, methinks you would run to him and say, "Jesus, we come. Thou meek and lowly Messiah, be thou our all!" Nay, you would not come; I am mistaken. If sovereign grace draw you not under the sound of the gospel, neither would you be converted though Christ should appear before you. But hear now the message of that gospel—"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved; for he that believeth on him and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not, must be damned."

SERMON XXV.

WEAK HANDS AND FEEBLE KNEES.

"Strengthen ye the weak hands and confirm the feeble knees."—ISAIAH, xxx. 3.

IT is the duty of all men to be careful of the sons of sorrow. There be some who from their very birth are marked by melancholy as her own. The silent shades of sorrow are their congenial haunts; the glades of the forest of grief are the only places where their leaf can flourish. Others there are who through some crushing misfortune are brought so low that they never hold up their heads again, but go from that time forth mourning to their graves. Some there be, again, who, disappointed in their early youth, either in some fond object of their affections, or else in some project of their young ambition, never can dare to face the world, but shrink from contact with their fellows, even as the sensitive plant curls up its tendrils at the touch. In all flocks there must be lambs, and weak and wounded sheep; and among the flock of men, it seems that there must necessarily be some who should more than others prove the truth of Job's declaration, "Man is born to trouble even as the sparks fly upwards." It is the duty then of those of us who are more free than others from despondency of spirit, to be very tender to these weak ones. Far be it from the man of courageous disposition, of stern resolve, and of unbending purpose, to be hard towards those who are timid and despairing. If we have a lion-like spirit, let us not imitate the king of beasts in his cruelty to those timid fallow deer that fly before him, but let us place our strength at their service for their help and protection. Let us with downy fingers bind up the wounded heart· with oil and wine let us nourish

their fainting spirits. In this battle of life, let the unwounded warriors bear their injured comrades to the rear, bathe their wounds, and cover them from the storm of war. Be gentle with those that are desponding. Alas, it is not every man that has learned this lesson. There are some who deal with others with rough-handed thoughtlessness. "Ah," they say, "if such a one be so foolish as to be sensitive let him be." O speak not thus; to be sensitive, timid, and desponding, is ill enough in itself, without our being hard and untender towards those who are so afflicted. Go ye forth, and do to others as ye would that they should do to you; and as ye would that others should in your hours of despondency deal with you tenderly and comfortably, so deal ye tenderly and comfortably with them.

But my text, especially commands the minister to deal tenderly with those of Christ's people who are in such a condition, and these are not a few, for although religion changes the moral temperament of men, it does not change the physical. A man who is weak in health before conversion will probably be as weak afterwards, and many a spirit that has a tendency to despondency, has exhibited that tendency after conversion. We do not profess that the religion of Christ will so thoroughly change a man as to take away from him all his natural tendencies; it will give the despairing something that will alieviate that despondency, but as long as that is caused by a low state of body, or a diseased mind, we do not profess that the religion of Christ will totally remove it. No rather, we do see every day that amongst the best of God's servants, there are those who are always doubting, always looking to the dark side of every providence, who look at the threatening more than at the promise, are ready to write bitter things against themselves, and often put the bitter for sweet, and the sweet for bitter, erring against their own spirits and robbing themselves of comforts which they might enjoy. To those then, I shall have to speak this morning in the words of our text, "Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees."

There is a figure used in the text, and I shall keep to it. First, I shall attempt to show *the importance of hands and knees in going to heaven.* In the second place, I shall observe *the ill effect of*

having weak hands and feeble knees; then note *the causes of those weak hands and feeble knees;* for in so doing I hope I shall be able to apply a cure.

I. And, now, first, we find in our text hands and knees mentioned. We may be quite sure that THEY ARE VERY IMPORTANT IN GETTING TO HEAVEN. The hands and knees, we must remember, are those parts of the body in which the effects of fear are the most easily seen. Of course the root of despondency and fear must lie in the heart; it is that which is first moved with terror. But afterwards these extremities, these limbs of action, these modes of expressing the will of the heart begin to feel the weakness also. The hands hang down in terror, and the knees begin to tremble. We are always accustomed to describe a man when he is in a great fright, when some overwhelming danger appals him, as hanging down his hands or wringing them in despair, and as feeling his knees knocking together in the moment of his terror. Just so the prophet means, that wherever the Christian displays most his timidity and his dismay there we must be careful to apply the remedy of comfort. Now, it is the fact that when the Christian's heart begins to tremble, his hands of action grow weak, and his knees of prayer begin to tremble also; he becomes unable to do and unable to pray. He is weak in active service, and he becomes weak also in wrestling with his God. Hands and knees are the exhibitors of inward power. Now, there are some men whose fears are so great that they have become visible, and can no longer be concealed. There was a time when these sons of mourning were able to mask their sorrow with an outward cheerfulness, but now they cannot. The fear of the heart has glided into their hands and descended into their knees; and we see them hiding from us, as the hind, when smitten by the arrow, retires from the herd to bleed alone. To such as these, ye sons of consolation, are ye sent with words of pity and deeds of love.

But, note, the hands and knees are of the first importance because they represent active duty and supplication. The way to heaven is through faith in Christ; but after we have believed in Christ the legitimate tendency of faith is active service. Although the Christian shall go to heaven through the blood of Christ, yet

as a pilgrim he must walk there; and although he overcomes through the blood of the Lamb, yet as a warrior he must fight if he would reign. Active service is expected of every Christian. Christ does not put his children on a bed, and then carry them to heaven along a lazy road; but he gives them life, and bids that life develope itself; he gives them strength, and commands them to use the strength in working out their own salvation. While he works in them, they are passive; but he then bids them be active and work out what he has beforehand wrought in. He is no Christian who does not seek to serve his God. The very motto of the Christian should be "I serve." Christ's people are Christ's servants, and as the angels in heaven delight to fly at God's behests, so do the children of God delight to run in the way of his commands. Hence, then, if the knees be weak and the hands be weak, it is little that we can do. We cannot run with the weak knee; we cannot labor with the weak hand. How can ye, the servants of Christ, how can ye lift the heavy burdens which ye have to carry, if your hands be weak and your knees totter? How can ye pull down the walls of your enemies if your hands tremble? How can ye smite your foemen with the sword of faith if your arm be weak? Look well, then, to this, for herein ye suffer exceeding loss, if in active service ye lose power and strength.

Again, the knees may signify prayer. When a man becomes timid and desponding, his closet very soon becomes the chamber of woe. Our closets are either Bethels or Bochims,—the house of God or else the house of weeping. Let a man become timid, distrustful, doubting, fearing, trembling—what little power has he when he comes before the mercy-seat! He would believe in God but he cannot appropriate the promise. He would lay hold of the angel, but all his sinews shrink, and he cannot wrestle. He would plead the promise, but his hand refuses to clutch it with an iron grasp. And he goes away crying, "Oh that I could pray! oh that I could believe in God! oh that I could succeed with God in prayer, and become as a prevailing prince. Alas! I am as weak as water, and I can do nothing." Herein lies the importance of having a strong hand that we may serve God, and of

having a strong knee that we may wrestle with him in prayer, and get the blessing from him.

Note, again, that we may readily see what the prophet means by hands and knees, if we observe that a Christian, although his hopes are in heaven, stands upon the earth. It is with the hand of faith that the Christian lays hold upon that which is not seen, and endeavors to climb upwards to the skies; it is with his foot that he spurns the earth and all that it calls good or great. Let the Christian's foot be weak, and he cannot then despise the things that are seen: but he will be fixing his affection on things on earth and not on things above. Let his hand of faith, on the other hand, grow weak, and he cannot lay hold of the things that are in heaven. He will find it difficult to fix his hold above the stars, and feel that he is surely anchored; and very hard to climb the ladder Jacob saw. The foot represents the manner in which we deal with earth, we tread upon it boldly and courageously, despising its threats, contemning its riches, contemning its honors. The weak knee cannot do this; we are then apt to bend, and cringe, and fawn before a wicked world to be slaves, where we ought to be freemen, and vile where we ought to be noble. Here again we see the importance of the hands and the knees.

But you will remember also that there are certain parts of the spiritual pilgrimage where hands and knees are absolutely required. John Bunyan represents Christian as coming to the foot of the hill Difficulty, and he says, "I looked then after Christian, to see him go up the hill, where I perceived he fell from running to going, and from going to clambering upon his hands and knees, because of the steepness of the place." Many such a place you and I have had to pass, brother Christians. Once we could run along the walls of salvation with triumphant faith; at other times we could walk even through the valley of the shadow of death with quiet confidence: but we have come to a place of trial and of extraordinary difficulty, where all speed failed us, and strength did not suffice. Then, always on our knees in agony of prayer and always on our hands in simplicity of faith, we climbed our weary way, often fearing lest we should fall backward to our destruction, but crying out, "Lord, let my knee find a resting-place, let my hand lay hold on some projecting crag of promise, that

there I may get a fast hold, lest I totter and fall. I can but ascend slowly. My heart followeth hard after thee, my spirit crieth after thee; Lord, help me! help me to climb this weary way, for back I cannot go." Every Christian who knows much about divine experience will understand what this means. He will often be brought into such a position that he can make but little progress; and he must think it quite enough if he can hold his ground against the desperate difficulties of his path. Hands and knees, then, in many ways, are essential for a Christian's comfort, his help, and his advance in the road to heaven.

II. Now, I shall have, in the second place, to show THE ILL EFFECT OF WEAK HANDS AND KNEES.

And, first, we have already hinted that one ill fruit of a Christian having weak hands and knees is this, that he will not himself be able to make much progress in the divine life. Christian men have never attained to what they are to be. They have only started on their pilgrimage, and after they have gone their furthest, there is a yet-beyond towards which they must press with earnest heart, though with weary footsteps. How is it that some of you have made but little progress on the road to heaven? In looking back on your lives, some of you must acknowledge that you do not know much more about Christ now than you did six years ago. You do not enjoy greater nearness of access to him now than you did then. You are not more diligent in his service, or more fearless in his defence, than you were at a period which has long since elapsed. Perhaps you are compelled to feel that you have made no advance, or even have gone backward. Why is this? Is it not because your hands have become weak, your knees have become feeble? You have neglected prayer; you have forsaken your closets, you have not poured out your hearts before God with that frequency which once distinguished you, and you have not the faith you once possessed. You have not believed the promise as you ought to have done. You have not taken God at his naked word, and trusted to him as he deserved. And do you expect ever to make any progress in the road to heaven if you doubt your God? Do you imagine that you shall ever go far along in the heavenly pilgrimage if you neglect prayer? As well could you expect a plant to grow without air and water as

to expect your heart to grow without prayer and faith. A poor blanched thing may be produced in a dark cellar; and so may you maintain a poor, blanched miserable existence, if you live absent from your God, and apart from that strength which faith can give you, but you can never attain the healthy verdure of grace. Oh, man, if thou wouldst grow in grace, if thou wouldst comprehend with all saints what are the heights and depths, and know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, look well to thy knees that they be strong, look well to thy hands that they hang not down.

The Christians of this age seem to me to be content with themselves, though there is infinite reason for the reverse. When I sit down and read the biographies of saints who have gone to heaven, I am astonished at myself, and I can only weep to think how far I am behind these men, and then how much further I must be behind my divine Master. Surely the examples of eminent saints should spur us onward. If Henry Martin could unreservedly devote his life and energies to Christ's service, why may not we? If Martin Luther, with holy boldness, could face danger, why should not we? If Calvin, with clear and eagle eye, could read the doctrines of the gospel amid the mists of error, why should not we? If men of more modern times have been able to endure opprobrium and disgrace for Christ's sake, or if they in private have been able to reach to the seventh heaven of communion with God, and have lived on earth as if they were in paradise, why should not we? There is no reason why the least saint in God's family should not outrun the greatest. Why look upon the saints of olden time as if they were so far above us that we can never equal them? Oh, dream not so! What Abraham was, you may be. What the mightiest saint of that former life was, that ought you to be. You should never rest satisfied until you labor to surpass them all; yea, not even then, for you have not yet attained to the perfection which is in Christ. I know this age is one which is always satisfied if it gets barely enough to carry it to heaven. Where is that holy ambition which ought to stir the Christian soul to noble deeds? But few of us have felt it. We are drivelling dwarfs, content with the small height to which we have attained, forgetful of the steeps which tower above our heads. Up! Christian, up! The mount of holiness may be steep

to climb, but, man, the hill of God is a high hill, even as the hill of Bashan. Up! up! for it is only on its summit that the calm air of heaven can be breathed, and the mists of earth entirely swept away. But weak hands and feeble knees, I know, in this age, are the reasons why so few Christians attain to any eminence in the ways and works of God.

Yet, again, weak hands and feeble knees have another ill effect. They prevent our doing any great wonder for the good of the world. Oh! what work there is to do in this poor world of ours. Imagine the first colonist landing in Australia. If it had been revealed to him in a vision that, in process of time, the whole of that huge island should be ploughed, and sown, and built upon, and inhabited, he would have said, "How is this to be done? how can it ever be effected?" And, even now, great as has been the progress in that country, if we were assured that in a few short years the whole of it would be brought under tillage, we should be apt to ask, but how shall it be done? We should, however, very readily perceive that there must be strong knees to dig, and strong hands to delve and plough, or else the work never could be accomplished. Many there must be, and the many must be strong, else the work cannot be done. And now, lift up your eyes, this day! behold, the whole world lies before you like one huge untilled country. Who is to drive the ploughshare of divine grace through all the continents of this world? Who is to make this desert blossom like the rose? Who shall sow it with the good seed-corn of the kingdom of God? Where are the laborers who shall afterwards reap the whitening fields? Not weak hands and feeble knees; they cannot do it. Our knees must be strong and our sinews must be well braced, or else so great a work can never be accomplished. I believe one reason why the religion of Christ makes such little progress at this time, is because most of us are so weak. We find, a few centuries after Christ's death, his name was preached in every land; there was not one region of the known globe which had not heard the marvellous story of the cross. But, then, the followers of Christ were men who knew not what it was to tremble. They counted not their lives dear unto them; but leaving houses, and land, and families, for his name's sake, they went everywhere preaching the

Word. But at this day we are not strong. We must all be assured of a livelihood before we will go forth to preach the Word; and, even then, if no one shall smile on us, how soon we cease the work. We commence an enterprise, but little difficulties appal us. How many does the pastor have to see, of little men and little women who come creeping to him, and whining because they find difficulties in serving Christ. Is not this because ye have weak hands and feeble knees? If ye had the strong knees of the apostles, and the mighty hands of the ancient martyrs, nothing could stand against you. Let God's children once become strong, and woe unto thee, Babylon, woe unto thee, O Rome; down must ye fall, ye castles of the enemy. The weakness of God's children is your hope, but their strength is your despair. Let them once believe firmly, let them pray earnestly, and behold Victory waits upon their banners, and dismay will seize your hearts, ye enemies of Christ. We are at this time blessing God that great doors have been opened for the spread of the gospel. Hindostan, China, Japan, many lands we hope shall soon be visited by the Christian missionary. But are we not conscious that our opportunities are greater than our strength? Must not the Christian church confess that she has now a greater field, but she has, perhaps, fewer laborers than ever? The harvest is greater, but the laborers are fewer. Whence comes it? It comes from this fact, that through the church of Christ the weak hand and the feeble knee have become the general rule. "Oh," says one, "but surely there might be found some men to go out." And so say others as well as you, why are *you* not the man to go? You say others should be thrust into the vineyard, and why stand back yourself? That torpor which seizes upon us has seized upon others too. Let us not be hasty in condemning the rest of the church, till we have first tested ourselves. Do *we* not owe our all to Christ? Are we not *personally* his debtors? If we felt this debt, if we felt the value of souls, should not each of us give more towards the spread of this gospel? should we not pray more agonizingly? and would there not be found many of us who would be ready to labor more indefatigably. If the minister of Christ be weak, rest assured it is because the church itself is not strong. The ministry is but the index of the church. If we often fail in our pulpits, because

they are not filled with fervent men, we may reply to you, if the pews were fervent, the pulpit would catch the flame. I am not speaking of water; I know that water runs down hill; but I am now speaking of fire, and fire ascends. Let the fire begin with you, be you in earnest, supplicating, striving, and wrestling with God in prayer, and the fire shall ascend to the pulpit, and we, too, shall become as earnest as yourselves. Let us use no mutual recriminations. The whole church is alike at this present moment: it is all weak. There are but few and noble exceptions; but few who are strong in prayer, who are mighty in serving their God. And hence it is that Satan still retains his throne, still darkness broods over the nations, and still men are not saved. May God strengthen us, or what shall become of the world we wot not.

Again, weak hands and feeble knees very much dishonor Christ. I would say nothing to grieve the heart of any weak believer here present this morning, but still we must speak the truth. Want of faith and weakness in prayer dishonor Christ. Suppose you have a friend, and you say to him, "My friend, I have such confidence in you, that I will trust you with the title-deeds of my estate, and with all I have. Nay, more; I will trust you with my health, I will trust you with my life. Do what you will with me; I have such faith in your goodness and your wisdom that I am sure you will not be unkind, and will not err. I trust you." There is something honorable in faith to the object in whom it is reposed. Now, if you are able, with the strong hand of faith, to bring all you have and give it entire unto God, and say, "There, Lord, I surrender all to thee; do with me as thou wilt, and with mine too; take what thou wilt away; give me what thou pleasest, or withhold what thou choosest; I leave all in thy hands; I can trust thee entirely; I know thou wilt make no mistake; I know thou wilt not treat me harshly; I leave all to thee; without word, or thought, or wish, I surrender all." If you can do this, then Christ is glorified; but if your hand is weak, and you are hiding away some choice thing that you cannot give up to him, if you do not stand fully to the surrender, but keep back something from him, then that weak hand brings dishonor upon God. So also does the feeble knee. Some one has given you a promise, that if you are in need and go to him, he will give whatever you

want. You go up to his door, you knock timidly; and when he comes to meet you, you rush into the street and hide yourself, for you are ashamed that he should see you. Driven by neces sity, however, you knock again; at last he comes, and you stand trembling before him. "Well," says he, "what do you want?" "You have given me a promise, sir, that when I am in need you will do so-and-so for me, and I really do not believe it. I have no confidence in you, and I do not like to ask." There would be nothing honorable in that to any man. How far different was the example of Alexander's courtier. The king said to him, "I will give to thee whatever thou requesteth;" and the man asked such a gift as almost emptied Alexander's coffers. "Ay," says the monarch, "it was a great thing for him to ask, but it is only a little thing for Alexander to give. I like the man's confidence in me, in using my word to its fullest extent." Now when the believer goes to his closet and bows there with his feeble knee, and asks God to bless him, and does not half believe that he will, he dishonors God. But when a man goes up to his chamber, saying in his heart, "There is something that I want, and I am going to get it;" and he falls on his knees, and cries, "Lord, thou knowest all things: thou knowest that such a thing is necessary to me; there is thy promise; 'do as thou hast said,' Lord; I know thou wilt give it me." And when he rises from his knees, and goes down and says to his friend, "The blessing will come; I have asked for it; I have prayed the prayer of faith, and God will hear me;" why, such a man honors God. I would remind you again of a great proof of all this. Look at Mr. Müller, at Ashleydown, near Bristol. Could he have built that house for orphans if he had a weak hand and a feeble knee? No. But he had a strong hand; he meant to serve his God by feeding and clothing orphans. On the other hand he had a strong knee. 'Lord," he said, "I will do this enterprise—give me the means to do it." And he went to God, and did not doubt that he would do it. And, lo! thousands have rolled into his treasury, and he has never known lack; and now, seven hundred children live under his care, and are fed and clothed to the honor of God. Let us also seek to have strong hands and mighty knees, and so shall we honor God. If we do not build an orphan house to his

name, yet shall we raise our Ebenezer, and leave some trophy to the honor of his grace. These are some reasons why we should look well to hands and knees.

III. And, now, the last point was this: THERE ARE CERTAIN CAUSES OF WEAK HANDS AND FEEBLE KNEES, and in mentioning them, I shall endeavor to correct them.

Some Christians have weak hands and feeble knees becaus they are only infants. They are young Christians, they have no been converted long. God's family is like every other family; we do not expect the new-born convert to run alone at first. Perhaps it will be months, say sometimes years, before he will be able to feel his feet. We thank God that there is a very comfortable promise for those who are babes in Christ, and can not run alone:—"He shall carry the lambs in his bosom." "I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms," says God, by the prophet Hosea. So ye, just born to God, must not despair because ye can not as yet play the man with the promise; if ye can not now wrestle with the angel, remember, God does not require wrestling from infants. He will not overdrive his lambs. He does not expect long marches from feeble feet. As you are but weak, you shall have lighter duties. As you are at present but tender, and young, you shall not have heavy labors to perform. But seek to grow in grace. Feed upon the unadulterated milk of the Word of God, and pray that he would bring you up from babes into young men, and from young men into perfect men in Christ Jesus.

A more frequent cause, however, of weak hands and feeble knees, is starvation, absolute starvation. Is there such a thing known in England as starvation? Yes, there is of a spiritual kind. There are many houses which are dedicated to the worship of God, that certainly never were dedicated to the profit of man. There are places into which a Christian might enter all the year round, without ever getting any understanding of the doctrines of God at all. Many a minister, in these days, of fine language, and of polished, rounded periods, resembles Nero, who, when the city of Rome was starving, sent his galleys to Alexandria to bring back sand for the wrestlers, but not corn for the hungry mouths. We have heard many a discourse that has been very

fine indeed, as a moral essay, but it has had no food in it for the poor hungry mouths of God's people. One has but very little opinion of the present race of professing Christians when you see their frequent changes. I know men at this day who hear an Arminian with the greatest possible delight—"Such a dear, good, earnest man!" And if a Calvinist preaches the next Sunday who contradicts every word the other man said—"Oh, he is such a precious creature!" because he happens to have a great flow of words. And then comes another who happens to be a hyper Calvinist, and who says most extraordinary things—"He is a precious child of God, he preaches admirably!" And then there comes afterwards a Pelagian, or almost an Arian, and it is just the same—they take it all in, and delight in it. The reason is, because these people never taste the Word of God at all. They look at it, but so long as they do not taste it and feed on it they know nothing of it. If they fed on the Word, they would have their senses exercised by reason of the use, and they would be able to discern between the good and the evil, the precious and the vile. Many of our Calvinistic preachers do not feed God's people. They believe in election, but they do not preach it. They think particular redemption true, but they lock it up in the chest of their creed, and never bring it out in their ministry. They hold final perseverance, but they persevere in keeping quiet about it. They think there is such a thing as effectual calling, but they do not think they are called effectually to preach it. The great fault we find with many is, that they do not speak right out what they do believe. You could not know if you heard them fifty times what were the doctrines of the gospel, or what was their system of salvation. And hence God's people get starved. And all the while the only remedy they have for the poor, weak, starving child of God is a long whip. They are always cracking this whip with the loud sound of "do this! do that! and do the other!" If they would put the whip in the manger and feed God's people, then they would be able to run the heavenly race. But now it is all whip and no corn, and no creature can subsist upon that. No child of God can ever grow strong in grace with mere exhortation, if it be not associated with good old-fashioned doctrine. I should like to hear all our pulpits

sounding with the old-fashioned doctrine of John Owen, and of such men as Bunyan, and Charnock, and Goodwin, and those men of olden time who knew the truth and dared to preach it fully. There were giants in those days. In every parish church in the city of London, and in this borough, too, you might have found men who were no children in divinity, but masterly men, each of them able to declare the Word of God with the authority of a master in Israel. Now where find we such? We labor and we strive, we dig, we toil, we seek to be something, and we end in being nothing. And so it must be as long as hands are weak and knees are feeble; and so also must this be as long as good doctrine is denied us, and truth is kept back in the ministry. Feed God's children well; give them comfort; give them much to feed upon of the sweet things of the kingdom of God; and then they will grow strong, then they will begin to work.

But, again, fear is the great weakness of men's knees; doubt and distrust are the great relaxers of the strength of men's hands. He that hath faith in God is almost omnipotent; he that hath might in prayer (through the Holy Spirit) is quite so. He that believeth God with all his heart, there is none in the world that can match with him; and he that prayeth to God with all fervency of soul may overcome the divine omnipotence itself, and move the arm that moves the world. Give a man faith, and he is in the midst of his enemies like a lion amid a herd of dogs, he sweeps them away. With what an easy motion of his gigantic strength he rips them open and lays them dead. Nothing can stand against the man who believes. He plants his standard in the midst of rocks: he stands up to it and draws his sword, and cries, "Come one, come all; this rock shall fly from its firm base as soon as I; I am a match for you; I believe, and therefore have I spoken; I believe still, and therefore do I speak again; and I will not move though hell and earth come against me." But when a man becomes doubting and timid, where is his strength The moment you doubt away goes your might. Strong fee make a man mighty, but a strong knee makes him mightier still Christ's soldiers always win their battles on their knees. On their feet they may be conquered, but on their knees they are invincible. The praying legion is the thundering legion. Napo

leon sent out his old guard in the last extremity of the battle of Waterloo. They had always carried victory with them, but they were at last defeated. But the old guard of the church of Christ is the legion of prayer. The men that are mighty on their knees, these never have been defeated. When they march on in steady phalanx, they are mightier than the push of bayonet, through British arms and British hearts should drive the bayonet home. Nothing can stand against the men that pray. Let the church but once fall on its knees, and it shall have might to make the enemy fall on its knees—not in prayer, but in terror and dismay. Other warriors cry, "Up, guards, and at them!" Our cry is, "Down, guards, on your knees, and at them!" There, on your knees you become mighty; you draw near to the great seat of God, and then you draw near to the fountain of your strength and of your triumph. Fear, then, must be got rid of. We must labor with God, that he would be pleased to give us strong faith; that we may not doubt the Word of God, nor doubt our interest, nor doubt his love, nor doubt our perseverance, but may believe and become mighty, having no longer weak hands and feeble knees.

Let me add one more thought only; namely this, that sloth may make a man weak in his hands and in his feet. Arms become strong by using them. The blacksmith gets a brawny hand by constantly using his hammer. He who climbs the mountain, or walks many a mile a day, becomes strong in his feet. Those who sit still and walk but a little while are wearied with a few miles; but those who have tramped through continents are not speedily to be wearied. Use makes us strong, but sloth enfeebles us. There are many of you who might be stronger if you labored more. What a lazy corporation the church of Christ is! Taking it all round there must be, I think, more lazy people in the church of Christ than there is to be found in any other body of men. There are some that do valiantly and serve God, but how many of you there are who are quite content to occupy your seats and hear sermons without doing any thing for God's cause. I do not hesitate to say that I believe there are many of you here who never won a soul to Christ in your lives, and scarcely ever tried to do so. You never lay poor souls to

heart; you never go to God in heart and prayer for your poor perishing neighbors. Now and then, if you see a drunken man, you say, "it is a great pity;" and if you hear of a murder, you say, "it is a dreadful thing." But very little you care about it. You do not agonize and cry for the iniquity of this land. What do you do? You put a sixpence in the plate now and then, and that is your gift to God's cause; you sing a hymn or join in prayer, and that is your service to God. The custom with our religious people is, they pay their seat-rent, they attend the chapel, and then they have done their duty. And even in the ministry itself, you hear of a clergyman speaking of doing his duty, when he reads his prayer and when he has done his preaching. But we want to have warmer hearts, and more active lives, or else, surely, the church must die of sloth. Oh, that every one of you would think you had something to do for Christ in this life, and that you must do it. If your knees are feeble, serve God the best you can with them; if your hands hang down, then do the best you can with the hands hanging down, and pray God to strengthen them, until you become mighty, and then you will be able to do more. But do something every one of you. If England expects every one to do his duty, how much more may the church demand of every professor that he should be doing something for his Master. Do not think it is enough to get good; *do good.* The candle must soon be extinguished that is shut up without fresh air. Give your light plenty of air, and it will burn all the brighter; and others seeing your light will be able to rejoice in it. You are not to eat your morsel alone; if you do you will become weak, for God hath so ordained it; that if we keep our religion to ourselves it will become feeble. The man who hoards his gold grows no richer, but he who puts it out to usury will grow richer himself and help to enrich other men Do so with your religion; put it out to usury, and you will grow richer, water men's souls, and you shall be watered. The most practical way for religious people is to do something; visit the sick, help the poor, teach the ignorant, succor the distressed; and in all these ways you will find that God will bless you, and your hands shall become strong, and your knees shall not totter. Above all, cry for the Holy Spirit to strengthen you, for without him all is vain.

SERMON XXVI.

THE BLIND BEGGAR.

"And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimeus, the son of Timeus, sat by the highway side begging. And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me. And many charged him that he should hold his peace; but he cried the more, a great deal, Thou son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee. And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus. And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight. And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way."—MARK, x. 46–52.

THIS poor man was beset with two great evils—blindness and poverty. It is sad enough to be blind, but if a man that is blind is in possession of riches, there are ten thousand comforts which may help to cheer the darkness of his eye, and alleviate the sadness of his heart. But to be both blind and poor, these were a combination of the sternest evils. One thinks it scarcely possible to resist the cry of a beggar whom we meet in the street if he is blind. We pity the blind man when he is surrounded with luxury, but when we see a blind man in want, and following the beggar's trade in the frequented streets, we can hardly forbear stopping to assist him. This case of Bartimeus, however, is but a picture of our own. We are by nature blind and poor. It is true we account ourselves able enough to see; but this is but one phase of our blindness. Our blindness is of such a kind that it makes us think our vision perfect; whereas, when we are enlightened by the Holy Spirit, we discover our previous sight to have been

blindness indeed. Spiritually, we are blind; we are unable to discern our lost estate; unable to behold the blackness of sin, or the terrors of the wrath to come. The unrenewed mind is so blind, that it perceives not the all-attractive beauty of Christ; the Sun of Righteousness may arise with healing beneath his wings, but 'twere all in vain for those who cannot see his shining. Christ may do many mighty works in their presence, but they do no ecognize his glory; we are blind until he has opened our eyes But besides being blind, we are also by nature poor. Our father Adam spent our birthright, lost our estates. Paradise, the homestead of our race, has become delapidated, and we are left in the depths of beggary without any thing with which we may buy bread for our hungry souls, or raiment for our naked spirits; blindness and beggary are the lot of all men after a spiritual fashion, till Jesus visits them in love. Look around then, ye children of God; look around you this morning, and ye shall see in this hall many a counterpart of poor blind Bartimeus sitting by the wayside begging. I hope there be many such come here, who though they be blind, and naked, and poor, nevertheless are begging—longing to get something more than they have —not content with their position. With just enough spiritual life and sensitiveness to know their misery, they have come up to this place begging. Oh that while Jesus passes by this day they may have faith to cry aloud to him for mercy! Oh may his gracious heart be moved by their thrilling cry, "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me!" Oh may he turn and give sight unto such, that they may follow him and go on their way rejoicing.

This morning I shall address myself most particularly to the poor and blind souls here to-day. The poor blind man's faith described in this passage of Scripture, is a fit picture of the faith which I pray God you may be enabled to exert to the saving of your souls. We shall notice the *origin of his faith, how his faith perceived its opportunity when Jesus passed by;* we shall *listen to his faith while it cries and begs;* we shall *look upon his faith while it leaps in joyous obedience to the divine call;* and then we shall *hear his faith describing his case:* "Lord, that I might receive my sight;" and I trust we shall be enabled to rejoice to

gether with this poor believing man, when his sight is restored, as we see him in the beauty of thankfulness and gratitude follow Jesus in the way.

I. First, then, we shall note THE ORIGIN OF THIS POOR BLIND MAN'S FAITH. He had faith, for it was his faith which obtained for him his sight. Now, where did he get it? We are not told in this passage how Bartimeus came to believe Jesus to be the Messiah; but I think we may very fairly risk a conjecture. It is quite certain that Bartimeus did not come to believe in Christ from what he saw. Jesus had worked many miracles; many eyes had seen, and many hearts had believed, because of what they saw. Bartimeus also believed, but certainly not as the result of his eye-sight, for he was stone-blind. No ray of light had ever burst into his soul; he was shut up in thick darkness, and could see nothing. How then was it that he came to believe? It certainly could not have been because he had travelled much through the country, for blind men stay at home; they care not to journey far. There is nothing they can see. However fair the landscape, they cannot drink it in with their eyes; whatever lovely spots others may behold, there are no attractions for their blank survey. They therefore stay at home. And especially a mendicant like this; how should he travel? He would be perhaps unknown out of the city in which his father Timeus had lived—even Jericho. He could not move the heart of strangers to charity, nor would he be likely to find a guide to conduct him throughout the dreary miles of that land. He would be almost necessarily a poor blind stay-at-home. Then how did he acquire his faith? Methinks it might be in this fashion. On the nearest bank he could find outside Jericho, he sat begging in the sunlight; for blind men always love to bask in the sun. Though they see nothing, there is a kind of glimmering that penetrates the visual organ, and they rejoice in it. At least they feel the heat of the great orb of day, if they see not his light. Well, as he sat there, he would hear the passers by talking of Jesus of Nazareth, and as blind men are usually inquisitive, he would ask them to stay and tell him the story—some tale of what Jesus had done; and they would tell him how he raised the dead, and healed the leper; and he would say, "I wonder if he can give sight to the blind."

And one day it came to pass, that he was told Jesus had restored to sight a man who had been born blind. This indeed was the great master-story that the world has to tell, for it had never been so known before in Israel, that a man who had been born blind should have his eyes opened. I think I see the poor man as he hears the story, he drinks it in, clasps his hands, and cries, "Then there is yet hope for me. Mayhap the Prophet will pass this way and if he doth, oh, I will cry to him, I will beg him to open my eyes too; for if the worst case has been cured, then surely mine may be." Many and many a day as he sat there, he would call to the passer-by again, and would say, "Come, tell me the story of the man that was born blind, and of Jesus of Nazareth that opened his eyes," and perhaps he would even get tiresome, as blind men are wont. He must hear the story told him a hundred times over, and always would there be a smile on the poor fellow's face when he heard the refreshing narrative. It never could be told too often, for he loved to hear it. To him it was like a cool refreshing breeze in the heat of a burning sun. "Tell it me, tell it me, tell it me again," says he—"the sweet story of the man that opened the eyes of the blind." And methinks as he sat all alone, and unable to divert his mind with many things, he would always keep his heart fixed on that one narrative, and turn it over, and over, and over again, till in his day-dreams he would half think he could see, and sometimes almost imagine that his own eyes were going to be opened too. Perhaps on one of those occasions, as he was turning over this in his mind, some text of Scripture he had heard in the synagogue, occurred to him; he heard that Messiah should come to open the eyes of the blind, and, quick in thought, having better eyes within than he had without, he came at once to the conclusion that the man who could open the eyes of the blind was none other than the Messiah; and from that day he was a secret disciple of Jesus. He might have heard him scoffed at, but *he* did not scoff. How could he scoff at one who had opened the eyes of the blind? He might have heard many a passer-by reviling Christ, and calling him an impostor, but *he* could not join in the reviling. How could he be a deceiver who gave sight to poor blind men? I fancy this would be the cherished dream of his life. And per

haps for the two or three years of the Saviour's ministry, the one thought of the poor blind man would be "Jesus of Nazareth opened the eyes of one that was blind." That story which he had heard led him to believe Jesus must be the predicted Messiah.

Now, O ye spiritually blind, ye spiritually poor, how is it ye have not believed in Christ? Ye have heard the wondrous deed which he has done; "Faith cometh by hearing." Ye have understood how one after another has been pardoned and forgiven, you have stood in the house of God, and listened to the confession of the penitent and the joyous shout of the believer, and yet you believe not. You have journeyed up year after year to the sanctuary of God, and ye have heard many stories—many a glorious narrative of the pardoning power of Christ; and how is it, O ye spiritually blind, that ye have never thought on him? Why is it you have not turned this over and over in your minds. "This man receiveth sinners, and will he not receive me?" How is it that ye have not recollected that he who put away the sin of Paul and Magdalene can put away yours also. Surely, if but one story told into the ear of the poor blind man could give him faith, if his faith came but by one hearing, how is it that though ye have heard many times that there was no salvation without faith in Christ, and listened to many an earnest appeal, yet ye have not believed? Yet, it may be, I have among these poor blind men, some here to-day that are simply believing. You have never yet laid hold of faith, but still in the depths of your soul there is a something which says, "Yes, he is able to save me; I know he hath power to forgive," and sometimes the voice speaks a little louder, and it cheers your heart with a thought like this, "Go to him, he will not cast you away, he has never cast out one yet who did venture upon his power and goodness." Well, my dear hearer, if thou art in this plight, thou art happy, and I am a happy man to have the privilege of addressing thee—it shall not be long ere the faith within thee, which has been born by hearing, shall acquire strength enough to exercise itself to gain the blessing. That is the first thing—the origin of the faith of poor blind Bartimeus, it doubtless came by hearing.

II. Now, in the next place, we shall notice his faith in ITS QUICKNESS AT GRASPING THE GRACIOUS OPPORTUNITY.

Jesus had been through Jericho, and as he went into the city there was a blind man standing by the way, and Jesus healed *him*. Bartimeus however seems to have resided at the other ide of Jericho, therefore he did not get a blessing till Christ was bout to leave it. He is sitting down upon his customary spot by the wayside where some friend has left him, that he might remain there all day and beg, and he hears a great noise and trampling of feet, he wonders what it is, and he asks a passer-by what is that noise? "Why all this tumult?" And the answer is, "Jesus of Nazareth passeth by." That is but small encouragement, yet his faith had now arrived at such a strength that this was quite enough for him, that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by. Unbelief would have said, "He passes by, there is no healing for you; he passes by, there is no hope of mercy; he is about to leave, and he takes no notice of you." Why, if you and I needed encouragement, we should want Christ to stand still; we should need that some one should say, "Jesus of Nazareth is standing still and looking for you;" ay, but this poor man's faith was of such a character that it could feed on any dry crust on which our puny little faith would have starved. He was like that poor woman, who when she was repulsed, said, "Truth, Lord, I am but a dog, yet the dogs eat the crumbs which fall from the master's table." He only heard "Jesus of Nazareth passeth by;" but that was enough for him. It was a slender opportunity. He might have reasoned thus with himself, "Jesus is passing by, he is just going out of Jericho; surely he cannot stay now he is on a journey." No, rather did he argue thus with himself, "if he is going out of Jericho, so much the more reason that I should stop him, for this may be my last hance." And, therefore, what unbelief would argue as a reason for stopping his mouth did but open it the wider. Unbelief might have said, "He is surrounded by a great multitude of people, he cannot get at you. His disciples are round about him too, he will be so busy in addressing them that he will never regard your feeble cry." "Ay," said he, "so much the greater reason then that I should cry with all my might;" and he makes

the very multitude of people become a fresh argument why he should shout aloud, "Jesus of Nazareth have mercy upon me." So, however slender the opportunity, yet it encouraged him.

And now, my dear hearers, we turn to you again. Faith has been in your heart perhaps for many a day, but how foolish have you been; you have not availed youself of encouraging opportunities as you might have done. How many times has Christ not only passed by, but stopped and knocked at your door, and stood in your house. He has wooed and invited you, and yet you would not come, still trembling and wavering, you durst not exercise the faith you have, and risk the results and come boldly to him. He has stood in your streets,—"Lo, these many years," till the poor blind man's hair would have turned gray with age. He is standing in the street to-day—to-day he addresses you and says, "Sinner, come to me and live." To-day is mercy freely presented to you; to-day is the declaration made—"Whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely." You, poor unbelieving heart, will you not, dare you not take advantage of the encouragement to come to him? Your encouragements are infinitely greater than those of this poor blind man, let them not be lost upon you. Come now, this very moment, cry aloud to him now, ask him to have mercy upon you, for now he not only passes by, but he presents himself with outstretched arms, and cries, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest, and life, and salvation."

Such was the encouragement of this man's faith, and I would that something in the service of this morning, might give encouragement to some poor Bartimeus, who is sitting or standing here.

III. In the third place, having noticed how the faith of the blind man discovered and seized upon this opportunity, the passing by of the gracious Saviour, we have TO LISTEN TO THE CRY OF FAITH. The poor blind man sitting there, is informed that *it is* Jesus of Nazareth. Without a moment's pause or ado, he is up, and begins to cry—"Thou Son of David, have mercy upon me—thou Son of David, have mercy on me." But he is in the middle of a fair discourse, and his hearers like not that he should be interrupted—"Hold thy tongue, blind man. Begone! he can

not attend to thee." Yet what does the narrative say about him? "He cried the more a great deal;" not only cried he more, but he cries a *great deal more*, "Thou son of David, have mercy on me." "Oh," says Peter, "do not interrupt the Master, what are you so noisy for?" "Thou Son of David, have mercy on me:" he repeats it again. "Remove him," says one, "he nterrupts the whole service, take him away," and so they tried to move him; yet he cries the more vigorously and vehemently, 'Thou Son of David, have mercy on me—thou Son of David, have mercy on me." Methinks we hear his shout. It is not to be imitated; no *artiste* could throw into an utterance such vehemence or such emotion as this man would cast into it—"Thou Son of David, have mercy on me." Every word would tell, every syllable would suggest an argument, there would be the very strength, and might, and blood, and sinew of that man's life cast into it; he would be like Jacob wrestling with the angel, and every word would be a hand to grasp him that he might not go. "Thou Son of David, have mercy on me." We have here a picture of the power of faith. In every case, sinner, if thou wouldst be saved, thy faith must exercise itself in crying. The gate of heaven is to be opened only in one way, by the very earnest use of the knocker of prayer. Thou canst not have thine eyes opened until thy mouth is opened. Open thy mouth in prayer, and he shall open thine eyes to see; so shalt thou find joy and gladness. Mark you, when a man hath faith in the soul and earnestness combined with it, he will pray indeed. Call ye not those things prayers that ye hear read in the churches Imagine not that those orations are prayers that you hear in our prayer-meetings. Prayer is something nobler than all these. That is prayer, when the poor soul in some weighty trouble, fainting and athirst, lifts up its streaming eyes, and wrings its hands, and beats its bosom, and then cries, "Thou Son of David, have mercy on me." Your cold orations will ne'er reach the throne of God. It is the burning lava of the soul that hath a furnace within—a very volcano of grief and sorrow—it is that burning lava of prayer that finds its way to God. No prayer ever reaches God's heart which does not come from our hearts. Nine out of ten of the prayers which ye listen to in our public

services have so little zeal in them, that if they obtained a blessing it would be a miracle of miracles indeed.

My dear hearers, are you now seeking Christ in earnest prayer? — Be not afraid of being too earnest or too persevering. Go to Christ this day, agonize and wrestle with him; beg him to have mercy on you, and if he hear you not, go to him again, and again, and again. Seven times a day call upon him, and resolve in your heart that you will never cease from prayer till the Holy Ghost hath revealed to your soul the pardon of your sin. When once the Lord brings a man to this resolve, "I will be saved. If I perish, I will still go to the throne of grace and perish only there," that man cannot perish. He is a saved man, and shall see God's face with joy. The worst of us is, we pray with a little spasmodic earnestness and then we cease. We begin again, and then once more the fervor ceases and we leave off our prayers. If we would get heaven, we must carry it not by one desperate assault, but by a continuous blockade. We must take it with the red-hot shot of fervent prayer. But this must be fired day and night, until at least the city of heaven yields to us. The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent must take it by force. Behold the courage of this man. He is hindered by many, but he will not cease to pray. So if the flesh, the devil, and your own hearts should bid you cease your supplication, never do so, but so much the more a great deal cry aloud, "Thou Son of David have mercy on me."

I must observe here the simplicity of this man's prayer. He did not want a liturgy or a prayer-book on this occasion. There was something he needed, and he asked for that. When we have our needs at hand they will usually suggest the proper language. I remember a remark of quaint old Bunyan, speaking of those who make prayers for others, "The Apostle Paul said he knew not what to pray for, and yet," says he, "there are many infinitely inferior to the Apostle Paul, who can write prayers; who do not only know what to pray for, and how to pray, but who know how other people should pray, and not only that, but who know how they ought to pray from the first day of January to the last of December." We cannot dispense with the fresh influence of the Holy Spirit suggesting words in which

our needs may be couched; and as to the idea that any form o prayer will ever suit an awakened and enlightened believer, or will ever be fit and proper for the lip of a penitent sinner—I cannot imagine it. This man cried from his heart, the words that came first—the simplest which could possibly express his desire—"Thou Son of David, have mercy on me." Go and do thou likewise thou poor, blind sinner, and the Lord will hear thee, as he did Bartimeus.

High over the buzz and noise of the multitude and the sound of the trampling of feet is heard a sweet voice, which tells of mercy, and of love, and of grace. But louder than that voice is heard a piercing cry—a cry repeated many and many a time—which gathers strength in repetition; and though the throat that utters it be hoarse, yet does the cry wax louder and louder, and stronger still,—"Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me." The Master stops. The sound of misery in earnest to be relieved can never be neglected by him. He looks around: there sits Bartimeus. The Saviour can see him, though he cannot see the Saviour: "Bring him hither to me," saith he; "let him come to me, that I may have mercy on him." And now, they who had bidden him hold his clamor change the note, and gathering around him they say, "Be of good cheer; rise, he calleth thee." Ah, poor comforters! they would not soothe him when he needed it. What cared he now for all they had to say? The Master had spoken; that was enough, without their officious assistance Nevertheless they cry, "Arise, he calleth thee;" and they lead him, or are about to lead him, to Christ, but he needs no leading; pushing them aside he hurls back the garment in which he wrapped himself by night—no doubt a ragged one—and casting that away, the blind man seems as if he really saw at once. The sound guides him, and with a leap, leaving his cloak behind him waving his hands for very gladness, there he stands in the presence of him who shall give him sight.

IV. We pause here to observe HOW EAGERLY HE OBEYED THE CALL. The Master had but to speak, but to stand still, and command him to be called, and he comes. No pressure is needed. Peter need not pull him by one arm, and John by the other.

No; he leaps forward, and is glad to come. "He calleth me, and shall I stand back?"

And now, my dear hearers, how many of you have been called under the sound of the ministry, and yet you have not come? Why is it? Did you think that Christ did not mean it when he said—"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest?" Why is it that you still keep on at your labors and are still heavy laden? Why do you not come? Oh, come! Leap to him that calleth thee! I pray you cast away the raiment of your worldliness, the garment of your sin. Cast away the robe of your self-righteousness, and come, come away. Why is it that I bid you? Surely if you will not come at the Saviour's bidding, you will not come at mine. If your own stern necessities do not make you attend to his gracious call, surely nothing I can say can ever move you. O my poor blind brothers and sisters! you who cannot see Christ to be your Saviour, you that are full of guilt and fear, he calleth you,

"Come, ye weary, heavy laden,
Lost and ruined by the fall."

Come, ye that have no hope, no righteousness; ye outcast, ye desponding, ye distressed, ye lost, ye ruined, come! come, to-day! Whoever will, in your ears to-day doth mercy cry, "Arise, he calleth *thee!*" O, Saviour! call ye them effectually. Call now: let the Spirit speak. O Spirit of the living God, bid the poor prisoner come, and let him leap to lose his chains. I know that which kept me a long time from the Saviour was the idea that he had never called me; and yet when I came to him, I discovered that long ere that he had invited me, but I had closed my ear; I thought surely he had invited every one else to him, but I must be left out, the poorest and the vilest of them all. O sinner! if such be thy consciousness, then you are one to whom the invitation is specially addressed. Trust him now, just as thou art, with all thy sins about thee; come to him and ask him to forgive thee; plead his blood and merits, and thou canst not, shalt not plead in vain.

V. We proceed towards the conclusion. The man has come

to Christ, let US LISTEN TO HIS SUIT. Jesus, with loving condescension, takes him by the hand and in order to test him, and that all the crowd might see that he really knew what he wanted, Jesus said to him—"What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?" How plain the man's confession, not one word too many, he could not have said it in a word less—"Lord that I might receive my sight." There was no stammering here, no stuttering, and saying, "Lord, I hardly know what to say." He just told it at once—"Lord, that I might receive my sight."

Now if there be a hearer in this house who has a secret faith in Christ, and who has heard the invitation this morning, let me beseech you go home to your chamber, and there, kneeling by your bedside, by faith picture the Saviour saying to you—"What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?" "Fall on your knees, and without hesitation tell him all, tell him you are guilty, and you desire that he would pardon you. Confess your sins; keep none of them back. Say, "Lord, I implore thee pardon my drunkenness, my profanity, or whatever it may be that I have been guilty of;" and then still imagine thou hearest him saying —"What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?" Tell him, 'Lord, I would be kept from all these sins in the future. I shall not be content with being pardoned, I want to be renewed;" tell him thou hast a hard heart, ask him to soften it; tell him thou hast a blind eye, and thou canst not see thine interest in Christ. Ask him to open it; confess before him thou art full of iniquity and prone to wander; ask him to take thine heart and wash it, and then to set it upon things above, and suffer it no longer to be fond of the things of earth. Tell it out plainly, make a frank and full confession in his presence; and what if it should happen, my dear hearer, that this very day, while thou art in thy chamber, Christ should give thee the touch of grace, put thy sins away, ave thy soul, and give thee the joy to know that thou art now a child of God, and now an heir of heaven. Imitate the blind man in the explicitness and straightforwardness of his confession and his request,—"Lord, that I might receive my sight."

Once again, how cheering the fact, the blind man had no sooner stated his desire, than immediately he received his sight. Oh! how he must have leaped in that moment! What joys must

have rushed in upon his spirit! He saw not the men as trees walking, but he received his sight at once; not a glimmer, but a bright full burst of sunlight fell upon his benighted eyeballs. Some persons do not believe in instantaneous conversions, nevertheless they are facts. Many a man has come into this hall with all his sins about him, and ere he has left it has felt his sins forgiven. He has come here a hardened reprobate, but he has gone way from that day forth to lead a new life, and walk in the fear of God. The fact is, there are many conversions that are gradual; but regeneration after all, at least in the part of it called "quickening," must be instantaneous, and justification is given to a man as swiftly as the flash of lightning. We are full of sin one hour, but it is forgiven in an instant; and sins, past, present, and to come, are cast to the four winds of heaven in less time than the clock takes to beat the death of a second. The blind man saw immediately.

And now what would you imagine this man would do as soon as his eyes were opened. Has he a father, will he not go to see him? Has he a sister, or a brother, will he not long to get to his household? Above all, has he a partner of his poor blind existence, will he not seek her out to go and tell her that now he can behold the face of one who has so long loved and wept over him? Will he not now want to go and see the temple, and the glories of it? Does he not now desire to look upon the hills and all their beauties, and behold the sea and its storms and all its wonders? No, there is but one thing that poor blind man now longs for—it is that he may always see the man who has opened his eyes. "He followed Jesus in the way." What a beautiful picture this is of a true convert. The moment his sins are forgiven, the one thing he wants to do is to serve Christ. His tongue begins to itch to tell somebody else of the mercy he has found. He longs to go off to the next shop and tell some workfellow that his sins are all pardoned. He cannot be content. He thinks he could preach now. Put him in the pulpit, and though there were ten thousand before him, he would not blush to say, "He hath taken me out of the miry clay, and out of the horrible pit, and set my feet upon a rock, and put a new song into my mouth and established my goings." All he now asks is, "Lord, I would

follow thee whithersoever thou goest. Let me never lose thy company. Make my communion with thee everlasting. Cause my love to increase. May my service be continual, and in this life may I walk with Jesus, and in the world to come all I ask is, that I may live with him."

You see the crowd going along now. Who is that man in the midst with face so joyous? Who is that man who has lost his upper garment? See he wears the dress of a beggar. Who is he? You would not think there is any beggary about him; for his step is firm and his eye glistens and sparkles, and hearken to him; as he goes along, sometimes he is uttering a little hymn or song; at other times when others are singing, hearken to his notes, the loudest of them all. Who is this man, always so happy and so full of thankfulness? It is the poor blind Bartimeus, who once sat by the wayside begging. And do you see yonder man, his brother, and his prototype? Who is it that sings so heartily in the house of God, and who, when he is sitting in that house, or walking by the way, is continually humming to himself some strain of praise? Oh! it is that drunkard who has had his sins forgiven, it is that swearer who has had his profanity cleansed out, it is she who was once a harlot, but is now one of the daughters of Jerusalem,—'tis she who once led others to hell, who now washes her Redeemer's feet and wipes them with the hairs of her head. Oh, may God grant that this story of Bartimeus may be written over again in your experience, and may you all at last meet where the eternal light of God shall have chased away all blindness, and where the inhabitants shall never say, "I am sick."

SERMON XXVII.

CHRIST'S MANIFESTATION TO MARY MAGDALENE.

"Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father; and to my God, and your God."—John, xx. 17.

This was the first appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ after his resurrection. In sundry places and at divers times during the ensuing forty days he appeared to the different disciples, showed himself openly to them when they were assembled for worship, and at other times; but this was the first occasion of his being seen by any of his followers. The whole occurrence is very full of comfort, and we, who are poor weary pilgrims through this wilderness, need some words of comfort every now and then, to cheer us on our way. May the Holy Spirit sweetly assist us in addressing you now on the things of Christ, and may your hearts burn within you by the way.

I. First, IT IS PECULIARLY ENCOURAGING TO REMEMBER THAT THE FIRST PERSON TO WHOM JESUS CHRIST APPEARED AFTER HIS RESURRECTION WAS MARY MAGDALENE. Romanists will have it that Jesus Christ first of all appeared to the Virgin Mary, his mother, and they have invented some curious stories in order to give her this peculiar honor. Now this shows that in their opinion there was a peculiar honor conferred upon the person who first beheld the risen Saviour, and I need not say that their wishing to say it was the Virgin Mary is only just another instance of their perverting the truth. Mary Magdalene was the first who saw the Saviour after his resurrection; at least, if the guards saw him when they fled far away, they were not his disciples, and I mean to say that she was the first of the disciples who had the honor of seeing

him when he rose from the dead. It was a woman, then, that first saw the risen Saviour. It was a woman that was first in the transgression; it must be a woman who shall first behold Jesus Christ when he rose from the dead. If there be—and there certainly is—some degree of opprobrium connected with womanhood, because Eve first of all touched the fruit, there is a far greater degree of glory now connected with it, because Mary Magdalene first of all beheld the Saviour at the tomb. Not only was it a woman, but it was a sinner—a woman out of whom had been cast seven devils. Beside all that is said, I am inclined to think that there were other devils in Mary Magdalene besides those that made her a demoniac. Luther used to say of her, "So many devils, so many sins." She had been a sinner once, and then she became a demoniac, and afterwards became a saint. How strange it was that Jesus should appear to her! What, give the most honor to her who had the most of sin! Sweet thought! Then if "I the chief of sinners am," if I have an interest in the blood of Christ, there is no reason why I should not climb to the greatest heights of fellowship, and enjoy the best of the good things which the Lord has prepared for them that love him. When Jesus takes a sinner to himself, his pardon is so complete—so totally does he overlook all previous sin—that that chief of sinners, although he may not be as great a saint as the very chief of the apostles, who did most grievously rebel, so that he only obtained mercy because he did it ignorantly in unbelief, may yet be the most highly-favored of the servants of the Lord, and may have revelations made to him above measure. Mary Magdalene should comfort you who, after years of sin, have lately found a Saviour. Oh! think not that those years that you have spent in folly, though they must ever make you weep, will be the means of robbing you of his friendship. Oh! no, he will restore to you the hours the locusts have eaten, and he will not take away from you the pleasure of enjoying the bliss of God on earth, and certainly he will not diminish your glorious happiness when you shall stand before the throne.

Methinks, however, that Mary was selected to see Christ first, because she loved Jesus most. John loved Jesus much, but Mary loved him better; John went away when he saw an empty sepul

chre, but Mary stood without and wept. Love, you know, is a keen-eyed thing. They say love is blind. In one sense it is true; but there never were such good eyes as those which Love can carry in its head. Love will look after Jesus, and discover him where none else can. If I set the unloving heart to read a chapter, it finds no Jesus there; but if I set a Hawker to read that same portion of Scripture, he finds the name of Jesus from beginning to end. If I set a critical scholar to read a Psalm, he sees no Messiah there; but if I set an enthusiastic lover of the Saviour to read it, he sees him, if not in every verse, still here and there glimpses of his glory. Oh! if you want to see Jesus, and have sweet revelations of his glory, you must love him: methinks you must add to that—you must weep for him much, you must seek him diligently, seek him in the darkness and the twilight, seek him when the sun is risen, seek him at the tomb before the stone is rolled away; you must seek him when you behold that the stone is gone; you must seek him in the hollow tomb; you must seek him in the garden; you must seek him in life; you must seek him in death; and then, the more diligent you are in seeking, the more probability that Christ will manifest himself to you, and you shall rejoice on finding him. Mary was one of those who went forth bearing precious seed; she went forth weeping, but she returned to the disciples rejoicing, bringing her sheaves with her, for she had a good message for them. She had sown in tears when she went to seek her Lord, but she wept with joy when she found him in the garden. Happy was that woman who found Jesus and believed; truly she might rejoice in him, for she was highly favored among woman. You see, then, that there is much sweetness, more than I can tell you, in the thought that Mary Magdalene was the first person who was chosen to see the Lord Jesus Christ.

II. We will notice, secondly, SOME REASONS FOR THE PROHIBITION GIVEN IN THE TEXT. Why was it that Jesus said, "Touch me not?" And why was it that he gave this very strange reason—"For I am not yet ascended to my Father?" There seems to me to be very great comfort in this; I know it has comforted me if I understand it aright. When Mary Magdalene saw her Master, and had called him Rabboni, her next impulse was to cast

herself upon him and embrace him. But Jesus Christ said, "No; embrace me not"—for that is the fuller meaning of the word—"I have got something for you to do, I cannot allow you to stop to do that; there will be plenty of time to do that another day. I must send you to my disciples with a message; therefore, cling not to me. The strengthening of my disciples is preferable even to the embracing of your Lord. Cling not to me, for I am not yet ascended." It strikes me that Mary was half afraid that her Master would go directly; and she thought, "That is him—I know his voice. But he will go; I know he will vanish; the Spirit of God will take him away." She thought just as Obadiah did of Elijah. "And when Obadiah saw him, he said, Go tell the king, behold, Elijah is here. And he said, Not so, my lord; what, have I sinned that thou wouldst deliver thy servant into the hand of Ahab?" So Mary thought, "Oh! he will be gone." And she thought, "But I will hold him fast. This may be my only opportunity; I will hold him fast." But he said, "I am not going; I shall be here a little time longer; there will be time enough for embraces—time enough for touching me. The first thing I want you to do is to go to my disciples, and tell them that I am about to ascend to heaven." If you ask me, "Why should Jesus tell her that?" Let me suppose some of you have said, "I will have an hour of contemplation; I will cast myself upon my knees; I will open the Word of God; I will seek the Spirit to rest upon me; and I will hope that I shall be able to see Jesus, and to clasp him in my arms." A friend has called the day before, and says that he has an engagement for you. Perhaps you are called to attend a prayer-meeting, or to visit the sick, or to see some inquirer, or to do something for the Lord's cause, and you say, "There now; I expected to have had that evening for contemplation. Oh, I wish I had not so much to do with the church, I see that it robs me of my quiet hours. I love those sweet seasons of retirement when I can touch the Saviour, and embrace him to my heart. Why is it that I am to go out and feed the flock, and not find time for fellowship and communion so long and frequent as I desire?" Oh! when you think that, think you hear your Master saying, 'Embrace me not, for there is time in heaven for that Go thou to my brethren, and tell them some sweet words of con

solation; for while it is sweet for you to embrace me, it is sweeter to me for thee to go and embrace my poor brother, and show him the way to the kingdom." God forbid that we should say one word against the high joy of contemplation; it is a sweet thing. But sometimes work is better than worship, or rather, work is worship in its best form. Sometimes it is a better service to go to see the sick than to be at home on your knees. Sometimes it is a more devout serving of God to be busy for the church, even in what seem to be temporal matters, than to be seated at home, like Mary of old, at the feet of the Saviour, listening to his words, and doing nothing. I believe Martha is sometimes a great deal better than Mary. If Mary had always sat at the Saviour's feet, she would have deserved no commendation. It was well for Mary that she sat there then, for it was a proper occasion; but if she had sat there always, and left Martha to attend to the serving, then it would have been an abuse of her privilege. There are times when the Master must say, "Embrace me not, but go to my brethren, and tell them that I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."

And now, having just noticed these incidents on the surface of our text, which I think after all are full of comfort—if not to you they certainly have been to me—I will now endeavor to dilate upon some of the leading heads of the subject.

1. Jesus says, "Go and tell my brethren." Now it is a remarkable fact that *the higher Jesus Christ gets in glory, the more sweet are his expressions of love.* You know when he was on earth he said, "Henceforth, I call you not servants, but friends." But he never called them "brethren" until after he had risen from the dead. "Friends" he called them when he was a suffering man; and I dare say some of them thought, "If he should rise from the dead he will be ashamed of us poor fishermen. He called us friends when he was in his poverty, will he not return to that word 'servants' when he rises in majesty from the tomb?" No; when we should have expected Christ to relax his love, when he had risen in dignity, it was just the reverse. The higher his dignity, the lower his condescension. "Go and tell my *brethren.*" And there is another thing about that sweet word "brethren."

The disciples were never in a more sinful condition than they were at this very time; or rather they had never so grossly sinned as just before the Saviour's resurrection. Before the Saviour died they were with him every day; they were, all of them, in a measure faithful, never forsook their Master, never denied him, that I hear of, till he came to die. And yet all the time they were true and faithful he never called them any thing better than friends; he never called them "brethren." You would have thought that when they ran away from him, that when three of them slept in the garden during his agony, when all forsook him and fled, and when Peter especially denied him, the Saviour would have said, "No, I called you friends when you were faithful, I will now see whether I can stretch a point, even to call you servants." But we see the blacker their sin, the stronger his love; the more defiled they were, the more sweetly did he talk to them. He said to them, in deeds though not in words, "Henceforth, I call you not friends, for a friend hath no relation to his friend; but I call you brethren, for my Father is your Father, and my God is your God." Now carry those two sweet thoughts away with you, for sweet they are if the Spirit leads you into them—that the higher the Saviour gets the more free is he in the expression of his love; and that other thought, that the farther the disciples ran away from their Master, the more lovingly did he call them back again. Marvellous and strange, but nevertheless true. Who cannot derive comfort from such a thought as this? I know, ye feeble followers of Jesus, ye have sometimes thought that he loved his people when he was on earth, but that now he reigns exalted on high, he has forgotten such of them as you. Oh, be assured, inasmuch as he reached the summit of his glory he doth now manifest the summit of his love. The more he is exalted the more doth he manifest himself.

2. And I know again, you are saying that you have so greatly sinned that you cannot expect him to love you. Do again appropriate this thought, that *the sweetest promises in the Bible are for the very people that deserve them the least.* There are promises for those who follow close to their Saviour, and very sweet ones too; but some of the tenderest promises in the Word of God are

for those who have wandered away the most. Take, for instance, that sweet word, "He will not quench the smoking flax, nor break the bruised reed." A Christian is nothing better than a smoking flax. It is very likely, through simple neglect, that the believer does not burn brightly; and if he is a bruised reed, the bruise is the effect of some great backsliding. There is the sweet word in the promise, "He will not quench the smoking flax, nor break the bruised reed." Blessed Jesus, when we should have thought that our sins would cause thee to speak harshly, we find that thou hast the softest words for those who have most erred; and that our sins, that would seem to make thee angry, seem to make thee only to invite us back again with sweeter words than to those who have not erred so much as ourselves.

3 Now note here again—*every time Jesus Christ says any thing to his brethren, it is always something that requires faith on their part.* Why did he not say, "Go and tell my brethren I am risen?" Because they did not want any faith for that. He was risen; that was a fact that they could discover by their eye-sight, and some of them by their touch. "No," says he, "I will only make large drafts upon my peoples' faith. Go and tell them that I am about to ascend. Do not tell them I am risen; there will be nothing for their faith to lay hold of. Tell them that I ascend; that is something for them to believe." Now do you know this, Christian? The more thou hast of the manifest presence of Christ the more faith do you require. Have you not often asked to have a promise brought home to your heart by the special influences of the Spirit? Now, recollect, the more promises you have, the more faith you will require. The words of Christ demand faith at our hands. A manifestation from Christ is as truly a demand upon our faith as when he hides his face from us. When he hides his face he requires us to believe, even when he says nothing; but when he speaks, he requires us to believe something that he says. The more manifestations, the more your need of faith. "I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God." Oh, Luther was right when he said that all the pith of divinity lay in the pronouns—"*my* Father and *your* Father." "He is 'my Father' by eternal generation. 'I was begotten of my

Father from before all worlds.' He is 'our Father' by regeneration. He hath begotten us again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. He is 'my Father,' as I am the Head of the Church,—man and God, Christ—I call him Father in my Christhood, and I stand as your representative and say it; and inasmuch as you are all gathered up in me, he is your Father too—my Father and your Father." How sweet the word Father! He is your Father because he has the deepest love to protect you; and if you doubt whether his power is equal to his love hear what Jesus says—"I am going to my God and to your God." And inasmuch as God is omnipotent, and the Father is love, you have all the love you want, and all the power equal to that love. It seems sweet to hear Christ calling his Father God. As he was a man the Father was his God; as he was Christ he calls the Father God over him—"My Father is greater than I," speaking as a man; God being greater than a Mediator. "As man I worship him as you worship him; as man I look up to him as my Father the same as you do. He is my Father as he is your Father."

4. This leads us to make only one other remark—*How beautifully the Saviour refers to the believer's union with himself.* The whole Bible, when it is rightly understood, points to union with Christ, and this sweet verse is just full of it. Christ and his people have united interests. When Christ calls God his Father, we may call God "our Father," too. In his property we have a joint interest; he is heir of all things, and we are joint-heirs with him. In relationship Christ and his people are united. His brethren are our brethren; his Father is our Father. Even in service, as Christ was man, as he was the servant of God for our sakes, so the Master whom he served is the Master whom we serve, and we together take the same service upon ourselves, believing that we together shall have the same kingdom conferred upon us, and shall reign with him—"Tell my brethren that I ascend to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God."

An old divine calls Mary Magdalene *apostolorum apostola*, that is, the greatest apostle of the apostles; for she was sent to be the apostle to the apostles. An apostle is one sent, and Mary Mag

dalene was sent to those whom afterwards Christ sent to the ends of the earth. So may a poor humble woman be an apostle to one who shall afterwards be a great divine. Let us hear what this great apostle says to us. Once more, she does not tell us that Jesus Christ is about to ascend; she tells us that he has ascended; and whenever we draw around the table of our Lord, let s derive sweet influence from the fact that Jesus Christ has ascended. He has ascended—then he ascended as a Conqueror, leading captivity captive. Now he has ascended—then he ascended as a Forerunner for us, entering within the veil. He has ascended—then he has ascended as one to make preparation—"I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go away I will come again to receive you to myself." He has gone as an Intercessor, there he sits and there he stands for ever interceding before the throne of God for us, his children, his friends, his brethren. Oh that we may now put our unfeigned and constant trust in him who died, putting equal trust in him that rose again, making this our glory, both in his dying and in his rising, that he hath ascended up on high, and sitteth at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

Oh that those who are dead in sin were quickened by God that they might know something of the preciousness of having a Father in heaven, the same Father that Jesus Christ had! Sinner, I pray the Lord to make thee believe in Jesus Christ; and if thou hast sinned with Mary Magdalene, may he help thee to believe with her, that thou mayest share in her sweet manifestations, and have some sweet message some day to tell to the rest of the brethren.

SERMON XXVIII.

THE SIGHT OF INIQUITY.

"Why dost thou show me iniquity, and cause me to behold grievance?"—Hab. i. 3.

In this discourse it will be my endeavor to assign some reasons why God causes his people to see iniquity in themselves and others.

I. And we will begin with the first. Why does God cause us to see iniquity in ourselves? What is the reason of the Holy Spirit's discoveries, which he sometimes makes to us, of the evil of our hearts? It is well known to all who love the Lord, that there are seasons when the Holy Spirit takes us into the chambers of imagery. "Son of man," saith he, "I will show thee greater abominations than these." He lays bare the loathsome kennel of the human heart, and lets us look at all our deformity and depravity; he takes us to the "rock whence we were hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence we were digged." He bids us look with horror upon our natural state, and see that awful and hideous corruption that still remaineth in our hearts, even though we be regenerate. Why doth he do this? We will answer the question in several ways.

Sometimes he does it *to confirm us in the doctrines of grace* My brethren, Arminianism is the natural religion of us all. I think one of the surest ways in the world to put down all our self-sufficiency, and all our erroneous views of the Gospel, is for God the Holy Spirit to show us our own depravity. A man may talk about free will, while he knows nothing about himself; but when the Lord has shown him what he is by nature, he will say

no more about it; or if he says something about it in mere theory, he cannot believe it in his inmost spirit. A man says that sinners of their own will turn to God; he says that they do of their own strength, at least to a great degree, though assisted by the Holy Spirit, keep themselves, and that to some extent their final perseverance is dependent on their own diligence, and is not left entirely in the hands of God. This I am sure of, that if the Spirit takes him into the chambers of imagery, and lets him see his own iniquity, he may go in talking about his own will, but he will come out singing of free grace; for he will say, "O Lord, if thou hadst not begun the good work in me, it never could have originated in such a filthy pool as my heart; and if thou dost not carry on the work from first to last, it will soon come to a stand-still. If I am to stand in any righteousness except the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, I must stand naked before the bar of God; and if the work be not entirely thine own, or if thou art to be turned away by any sin or sinfulness in the creature, then, O Lord, I know I must perish." And this, when he has got right views upon the subject, will drive him to believe in discriminating grace, in irresistible vocation, in omnipotent keeping, and in the infallible perseverance of all the children of God.

It is very extraordinary how the belief of one of the doctrines of grace naturally leads to the belief of all the rest. The system of the Gospel is so logical, its truths fit so well into one another, that you cannot get a right knowledge of one, without at once, or in a very short time, discovering the others. The Lord begins by teaching us this foundation truth, our utter depravity, one that is burned into our conscience by bitter experience, and by terrible discoveries of our sinfulness; he knows right well that the other doctrines will follow, and that when this is really understood, we shall not be long before we have orthodox views of the whole covenant of grace, and the great system of the Gospel of Jesus. This, I think, is one reason why the Lord gives his people discoveries of their iniquity and grievance, that they may be sound in the faith, and that they may hold nothing but the doctrines of grace.

Moreover, *it is to keep them humble.* If our Master did not sometimes let us have a look at ourselves, we should be fearfully

proud. The old Puritans used to say, that God had given the peacock black feet, that he might not be proud of his bright feathers. So, said they, God has allowed his people to have black feet still, that they may not glory in any of the graces which God the Spirit has given them; but that while they have those graces, so bright and beautiful, they may still look down on their black natural depravity, and humble themselves before God. We are all, by nature, as proud as Lucifer. If any man thinks himself to be incapable of pride, he is very proud indeed. "Ah!" says one, "I know I never can be flattered." But, sir, you flatter yourself to an extraordinary degree, when you say that. Pride is natural to us; it is woven into the warp and woof of our being; we shall never get rid of it, till the worm has eaten up our flesh; nothing will ever cover up our pride except our winding sheets; and when our bodies are in them, and our souls are caught up to dwell with God, then pride shall be thoroughly cast out. Our high communion, our progress towards heaven, our increased knowledge, our good works, all these things have, through the evil heart of our unbelief, a tendency to puff us up, though, in truth, being all borrowed, and all given us by the Spirit, there is no legitimate cause of pride in any of us; and therefore, God, to keep his people in the right place, humbles them with discoveries of their sinfulness. If they had all sail, and no ballast, they would soon be wrecked; so that when he fills his people with abundant revelations, he sends this thorn in the flesh; and this messenger of Satan is sent to buffet them, that they may walk humbly with God, and bow their heads in submission before him, knowing themselves to be still unclean, apart from the work of Christ Jesus, which he has wrought out for them.

Beloved, you can bear me witness, that when you have had sad discoveries of your own heinous guilt, you have been humbled. Sometimes your good works have been a great evil to you, because you have prided yourself upon them, and brought yourself to the precipice of ruin. But manifestations of your guilt, by God's Spirit, brought home to your conscience, have been of essential service to you, by teaching you not to be high-minded, but rather to fear and to remember that your standing in grace is not of yourself, and therefore you must not boast. That is an

other good reason why we may bless God for showing us iniquity, if there were no other.

But a third reason is, that God sometimes shows his people their own wickedness, *to make them submissive in the hour of trouble.* A Pharisee, of all people, would be the worst man to be in Job's position. If I must be in a hospital, I would rather be there as a publican, than as a Pharisee. For a Pharisee nothing would be good enough; he would think his pangs and miseries great indeed for so righteous a man as he; he would think he had no right to suffer. But the poor publican would say, "I am a sinner, and these miseries are not a millionth part of what I deserve to suffer; these aches and pains are nothing, compared with what I merit at the hand of God; therefore I will bear all these things with submission. Why should a living man complain? I am out of hell yet, and therefore I must not murmur." Ah! brethren, we can never keep murmuring down. There is very much in the old English word murmur. Just sound it—it is mur-mur. Any child can say that. It is one of the easiest words to speak; and that is why, I think, we have got it for murmuring. Because murmuring is such a very easy thing; any one can murmur, any one can grumble, any one can complain. Murmuring seems to have been bred in the bone of Israel; for Israel in the wilderness were always murmuring; murmuring for water when they were thirsty, then murmuring for bread, then murmuring for meat, then murmuring because the Anakims were tall, then murmuring because they were to go and fight them, and then murmuring because they were not to go and fight them; murmuring first for one thing, and then for another thing; they were always at it; they were continually murmuring for forty years long in the wilderness. Ay, but the surest way to cure us of murmuring is to let us know our own ill-deserving. A man that has been taught his own wickedness and his own ill-deserving, will be less likely to murmur than any one else. The poor wretch that has had the rope round his neck, and been ready to be turned off, when he gets his pardon, and goes his way, you will not find him murmuring at the fare that is provided for him. But he will say, "Oh! it is such a wonder to be alive at all, such an act of mercy that I have had my life spared, that this dry bread be

comes like royal dainties, and this cup of cold water becomes to me like the richest wine." The Lord does thus take his children into the stripping-room, and into the starving-room, and let them see that all their afflictions are less than they deserve; that their troubles are but as the small dust of the balance, compared with the mountains of tribulation and anguish which they deserve to have received in hell.

Again. It is *to put us on our watch-tower.* When the Lord shows us the sin in our heart, it is like a captain pointing to a few skirmishers that have just come before an army that is advancing. "There, my men," says the captain, "you see those. They are the outposts, the men that are the advanced guard of the enemy; look sharp after them; there is a great army behind; be on your watch." So the Holy Spirit discovers to us our evil desires and corruptions for a moment; he wakes us up to see them; and when we have seen them, he says to us, "Take care; this little that I have shown thee is to warn thee of a greater thing that is behind. These few evil ones that have just appeared to thy vision are but the outriders of a host of black things that are ready to attack thee. Be upon thy watch-tower always; be constantly looking out for foes. I think that soldiers need to have a few skirmishes on their march; if they had not they might become careless and relax discipline, and then they might be enticed into a defile, and so be surprised and cut off. But when they have a few enemies to harass them on the flank and rear, they are very likely to be watchful and to keep a sharp look-out, so that in case of a sudden charge they would be ready to repel the foe. So the temptations of our flesh are often useful to wake us up. God often makes use of our sins, our inbred sins, to act like watchdogs in a house to wake us up, to let us know there are thieves trying to get in. Our few sins bark and bite, and then we start up to skirmish. But, ah! if we had not been awakened, if these had not been developed, there might have been hideous open sins, that would have surprised us in some moment when we were not upon our guard; and so we might have been slain by the hand of the enemy. Old Ralph Erskine said a very true thing, and a very right thing, when he said, "I would rather a roaring devil than a sleeping one at me;"

by which he meant, I would rather be tempted, I would rather be tried, I would rather be persecuted, I would rather be perplexed, than lead an easy life of it, and so go sailing along in self-confidence till I struck upon a rock,—

> "For more the treacherous calm I dread,
> Than tempests rolling o'er my head."

Because the calm is apt to breed a slothfulness which disables and times of ease seldom suit God's soldiers. Holidays ruined the army of Hannibal; and many an easy hour and day, when we have been free from our inbred sins, has been the means of throwing us off our guard, and leading us into worse sins on the morrow. God stirs up the Amalekites to make us ready for the battle, lest we should be surprised.

But one more answer to this question, then I will pass to the other point. The Lord shows us often our iniquity and our grievance, *to make us value salvation more.* You know, the man that thinks the most of a doctor, is generally the man who wants him most. When we are well, we often make jokes of doctors; we talk about their killing the people, and so on; but when we get ill, we always send for them. We laugh at the men; but we use them when we are sick ourselves. Ah! and so it is with the Lord's people; they, perhaps, may think lightly of Christ, when they do not see any present need for him; but when they discover their own leprosy, then it is they value the Physician. When they see their own ruin, then it is they prize the remedy. It is a great service to us, sometimes, to show us our bankrupt's schedule. Every man has had a bankrupt's schedule, because we are bankrupts by nature. We set up in trade for ourselves, and we soon turned bankrupts; we never paid a farthing in the pound, Jesus Christ stepped in and paid it all. But we should not know how great was his grace in so doing, did he not show us again our debt, and how very poor were our own hopes of meeting debts so immense, so infinitely beyond all our comprehension. God says to his children, "I brought you out of prison, and you do not think much of my deliverance to-day; I will take you back to prison, and let you see what kind of place it is, and then you will think more of the Breaker that broke your chains and

set you free. I have opened a fountain that sparkles with living water; you have been drinking of it day by day, till you are full, and you do not know its value. Come, I will put you in the waste, howling wilderness, and you shall suffer hunger, have your water spent in your bottle, and then you will know the preciousness of the rippling fountain which Christ hath opened for thirsty sinners. You have been eating at my table, every day feasting: you have scarce known what hunger is; I will just put you again in the furnace of conviction, and make you hunger after righteousness, and then you will prize the bread that came down from heaven, and think more of Jesus than you would have done, had it not been for this showing of iniquity and grievance."

All these things I have now spoken of, are matters of heart experience. Many persons do not know the plague of their heart. But you that love the Lord will own that, however quaintly I have put these things, there is great truth in them.

It is even so: we have had very solemn times, all of us, since we first knew the Lord; when we could not tell the right hand from the left in matters of Christianity; when, if any one had asked, "Are you the Lord's or no?" we dared not have stumbled out, "I am the Lord's." For our corruptions were so strong, and unbelief had become so rampant, and poor faith seemed to be so slumbering, like the fire in the ashes, that we could not tell whether there was any fire or not. Oh! brethren, do we not remember when we have sometimes knelt down in anguish, and said, "O Lord, I long to have this point decided—am I thine or am I not? If it be so, why am I thus? Why this wrestling of two armies in the Shulamite? Why is it that these confusions and these warrings are carried on in my spirit? Show me wherefore thou contendest with me, and why my sin contends with me. O Lord, do show me where I am vile!" And have we not found that these times have been of essential benefit to us? We have grown strong by these griefs; the sight of iniquity has made us wiser, more cautious, more prudent, more humble, more affectionate, and made us more firm in our belief in our Saviour afterwards, than we had ever been before.

II. Now I come to answer the question in another sense. Sometimes the iniquity and grievance are not in ourselves, but

IN OTHERS. Some of you may not have much of this world's goods; you, perhaps, live in a house where there are very ungodly people; down in your court the Sabbath is always broken; in the street where you reside, you seldom hear any thing on the Sabbath-day except oaths, and curses, and profanity, and a breach of the day of rest; and others of you, by your very connections, are called to mix with bad companions, whose speech, instead of being seasoned with salt, seems seasoned with brimstone, flavored only with blasphemy, and having perpetually in it the very brogue of hell. There are some of you called to labor with workmen, who, instead of endeavoring to help you to heaven, seem trying, like Christian's neighbors and wife, of whom you read in the "Pilgrim's Progress," to pull you back to the City of Destruction. You are, perhaps, asking this question, "O Lord, why am I in such a condition? Why has thy providence put me where I am thrown into contact with evil men? Why dost thou show me iniquity and cause me to behold grievance?" I will tell you two or three reasons.

The first is, *to let you see what you might have been yourselves.* John Bradford—you have heard the story of John Bradford a hundred times—when he used to see people taken by his window to Tyburn, to be hanged, said, "There goes John Bradford; if it had not been for the grace of God, John Bradford would have been hanged too." When you hear men swearing, you say, "That is what I would have been, if the Lord had not kept the door of my lips." When you see men taken up for robbery, you say, "That is what I might have been, if God had not kept me from sin." When you hear of the drunken brawl, or the murderous affray, you put your hand on your heart, and say, "Ah! the same thing might have come out of this; for hearts are very much alike. 'As face answereth to face in water, so the heart of man to man.' There is not much difference between one heart and another by nature; that man is a picture of what I might have been, if the restraining hand of God had not kept me back from sin." You know sometimes drunkards make men sober, good apostles of temperance drunkards are. For when they come reeling through the streets, in all their bestial stupidity, a man very naturally says, "What a fool that fellow makes

himself!" and it leads him to say, "I must avoid that thing, because I would not make myself so foolish." I think it was the old Greek lords used to make their slaves drunk, in order to keep their children from the vice, by seeing how absurd it looked.

Thus, perhaps, God allows wicked men to come in our way, to *make us see the evil of sin, that we may turn from it, pass by it, abhor it, and not indulge in it.* I have no doubt that the wickedness of men may be employed under the divine wisdom, and the overruling hand of God, for the sanctification of his own people. Just as, sometimes, a book that is full of bad orthography is one of the best things for teaching a child how to spell well, by leading him to set about correcting the bad spelling: so the Lord gives us bad spelling in order to teach us how to spell right. We have to correct ourselves by the evil of others, and learn from them to avoid the sins into which they have fallen. Wrecks may sometimes be made beacons; the ruin of one man may sometimes be a warning to another. And it is so with the Christian; for he knows how to use his sight of iniquity, and of grievances beheld in others, by avoiding the same iniquity himself.

In the second place, God sometimes allows us to see the sins of others, *to teach us to admire his sovereignty*, which plucked us as brands from the burning. We look at our neighbors that live in our street, and see them drinking down sin as a greedy ox drinketh down water, and we say, "Who hath made me to differ?" Grace—free grace. And then we ask, "Why has grace come to me more than to them? Why these favors to me above the rest?" And we are obliged to say, with Christ, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." When one of a family is converted, what a specimen that is of divine sovereignty! When there is a holy mother, with an ungodly husband, and wicked children, what an illustration that is of the sovereignty of God, in that one is taken and the others left! And when in a house two women have been grinding at the mill, and one has accompanied her grinding with the song of Sion, and the other with the voice of cursing, what a proof there has been of the sovereignty of God, in that "he will have mercy on whom he will have mercy;" that "it is not of him that willeth, nor of

him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." Ay, Christian, God hath put thee in the very midst of sin, to make grace the more conspicuous. If you ride in the country, sometimes, you see a field of wheat; you will very likely not notice one of the ears at all; but as you are going along you will see a hedge, and by some chance or other there has been an ear dropped into the ground under the hedge, and this one ear of corn has grown up through the brambles, and there it stands alone. Very likely you nudge your friend who is riding with you, and say, "There is an ear of wheat growing up among the brambles." It seems the more astonishing and notable thing from the place where it is. So, I think, a Christian in the Church is not a thing to be wondered at so much. The sovereignty of God is not so much seen amongst the righteous, as it is when we find the Christian growing up amongst the bushes and brambles of an ungodly world, showing forth his light in the midst of "a wicked and perverse generation." Who ever noticed glow-worms in the day time? But in the night time you will see them under the leaves. They were there by day, I dare say, but nobody saw them; but in the night, with their little lamps on their back, they glisten, and every one admires them. So the Christian, when he is in good company, is a blessed thing, and a great instance of divine love; but when in providence he is put into a dark place, where there is little of Gospel light and truth, then it is that his little lamp begins to glimmer, and he is more noticed than he ever was before. This is why the Lord sometimes puts his people there, to make his sovereignty, his power, his might, and his grace the more apparent. Even as men sometimes set jewels in foils to show their brightness, and put dark spots in their picture to make the lights become more apparent, so the Lord in his providence permits his people sometimes to sojourn in evil places; like Lot, to dwell in Sodom, and like Abraham, to go down among the Egyptians, or with the Philistines, in order that grace may be displayed, and the Lord's name may be called.

And now, I think I have another reason, and a better one, perhaps. "Why dost thou show me iniquity, and cause me to behold grievance?" Why, my brethren, God shows us the sin of our fellow-men, *that we may set more earnestly to work, and*

that we may be the means of saving souls and extending the kingdom of righteousness. When a captain takes his soldiers out to look at the enemy, it is like what I heard of a celebrated Scotchman, whose words I am scarcely able to pronounce: "Now, lads," said he, "there they are; if you dinna kill them they'll kill you." That was their choice. So it is with us. God brings us to walk in this city, where harlotry and vice on every side are to be seen, almost in noonday. Now then, soldiers of the cross, if ye dinna kill them they'll kill you. If you do not stand up for your Master, to keep them down, and keep the banner of the cross in the air, the enemy will be more than a match for you. I have been struck sometimes, when I have looked in a print window, and seen there pamphlets full of all manner of obscenity and infidelity and wickedness, and they have had the most blessed effect on my mind; for I have thought, "Well, if there is so much wickedness, so much the more reason why every minister should be in earnest, and why every Christian should seek with all his might to do good." You may live in very nice villas in the country; you do not go among the poor people, and you do not know what they are at. If you were to walk through some of the back slums and narrow alleys of London, you would say, "Oh, I never thought there could have been such places upon earth!" and if you could go where I have sometimes gone, up an old creaking staircase, where you have to stoop your head for fear of hitting it against a beam, and go into a room, and see a whole family there; go into another room, and see a whole family there; a little further, and see another family, all crowded and packed together, and then hear their language, and see their utter ignorance of every thing concerning Christ, almost as unenlightened as the Hottentots in their kraals in Africa—you would go away after seeing them, and say, "There is great reason tha we should be up and in earnest. We ought to be doing, sirs; we ought to be working well for our Master, after such a sight as this!" Oh! but we cover up our iniquity in this land a great deal; we fringe all London with glorious streets, so that when a foreigner rides through them he says, "What a grand city it is!" A varnished hypocrisy! What is there behind those streets? What will you find behind those palaces at the West-end? The

very lowest of places upon earth, where the poor are stowed away together by hundreds. We fringe the city just with a gauze and coating—with something that looks respectable and excellent. But, alas! for the internals of this city, how much of wickedness and sin dwell there! I bless God that there are some of you obliged to live where you see the wickedness of this city; I thank God that some of you cannot go to your houses at night, without seeing wickedness on the road. "Why," you say, "do you bless God that there is the wickedness?" No, I do not; but I bless God that you have to see it, because you will be the people who will go to others and say, "Strive for the salvation of men. Work, I beseech you, to do good, because the world is still full of wickedness, and the dark places even of this city are full of the habitations of cruelty." It is a long time since I have made a good speech at a public meeting; but I do remember doing it once. I stepped out, as one of the speakers was delivering a very, very pretty oration, and I went into a neighboring house to speak with a woman who wished to join the church. It was not in London. When I stepped into the house, there was the husband beastly drunk; he had got his wife up in a corner, and was with all his might trying to bruise her face, and tear her arms with his nails, till the blood flowed from her arms and face. Two or three rushed in, and dragged him away. She said she had endeavored with all her meekness to persuade him to allow her to go to the house of God that night; and the only reason why he ill-treated her was, because he said she would always be going to that place of worship. And when I had seen this sight, and looked on the poor woman, with tears in her eyes, I went into the place, and spoke like a man who had got his face and heart, and whole body, full of fire. I could not help it: I was all on flame against the sin of drunkenness, and sought with all my might to urge the members of the church to do all they could to scatter the light of the Gospel into a neighborhood which was so dark and black and filthy and abandoned. And I think it would do all of us good, when we preach, if we were sometimes to be dragged through some of the worst parts of London, to let us see the wickedness of it. It would do our Sunday-school teachers good, many of them, for they would then be more in

earnest with their children; and I think it would do good to some of our old friends, who sit and sleep almost all the service through, and are never much more than sleeping partners in the concern. If they did but know how the battle was going on, how tough the struggle and how stern the conflict, they would wake up from their slumbers, and go forth to the battle, and stand shoulder to shoulder, and deal blow after blow against the common enemy of our Lord Jesus Christ and of the welfare of man. Ah, my brethren, we want to know more of the evil of men, to make us more earnest; for if there be any thing in which the Church is lacking more than in any other matter, it is in the matter of earnestness.

Whitfield said, in one of his sermons, "O my God, when I think how this wicked city is perishing, and how many are dying for lack of knowledge, I feel I could stand on the top of every hackney coach in the streets of London to preach the Gospel." Why should he say that? Why was his zeal so burning? Because he had seen the sinfulness of men, and marked their follies. We shall never be thoroughly in earnest, till we are thoroughly aware of the evil that is before us. When the horse sees the precipice, he throws himself back, and will not madly dash himself down. So with the Church: if she could see the evil that is before her, she would surely draw herself back with energy, to save her own children from plunging into the yawning gulf. Ay, sirs, ye have iniquity in your very teeth, and at your doors; ye have iniquity every where round about you,—and yet how few of you are striving to do any thing for Christ! Ye are asked to help in this great battle: ye have so many calls ye cannot afford it. Ye are asked to do something in this cause, to give it a little time; ye cannot manage it. Ye are asked to speak; ye have so little ability, ye cannot do it. One half of the people that call themselves Christians want to be pressed fifty times to do a thing; and then, when they are got to do it, they are not worth having, because they are only pressed men—they are not one-half so good as volunteers. I would that all knew the evil this world is subject to, and the wickedness of men; and I think all of us who love the Saviour would start up from our seats to-night, and say, "Here am I; let me be a volunteer against the enemy; let me,

in my measure, whatever little measure that may be, go forth to serve my God, to practise virtue, and, by a holy example, and by every other means, seek to stem the raging torrent of the iniquity of the age."

And now, my dear friends, in closing, allow me just this one remark to another class of hearers. There is one who, but a little while ago, was an abandoned sinner; he could drink, he could swear, he could break the Sabbath, and curse God. One day he stepped into the house of God, and the Lord met with him, and now he is in misery, such as he cannot describe; his heart is all broken, his conscience is as if it had been lashed with the tenfold whip of the law, and as if brine had then been rubbed into his wounds; he is smarting all over with the wounds of his conscience, inflicted by the angry and fiery law of God. He is saying to himself, "O Lord, I must perish, I know I must; I see such wickedness in me, that I must perish and be cast away." Nay, poor soul, nay, that is not the right answer to the question. The question is, Why doth the Lord show thee iniquity? I will give thee the right answer. *It is to deliver thee from it.* If God has broken thine heart, he has broken it on purpose to give thee a new one. If he has killed thee by the law, he has killed thee on purpose to make thee alive by the Gospel; if he has wounded thee in thy conscience, he has done it that he may have room to pour in the oil and the balm of Christ Jesus. If he has stripped thee, he has only pulled thy rags off, that he may put on thee a perfect robe of spotless righteousness; and if he has cast thee into the ditch, so that thine own clothes abhor thee, as Job words it, it is that he may take thee to the fountain filled with blood, and give thee a perfect washing. And when the Lord pulls a man down, he does not do it to burn the old materials; he does it to build him up again. When he breaks a man's heart, it is not for the mere breaking's sake, it is that he may make it anew. If you have misery in your conscience on account of sin, God has dealings of love for you, and purposes of love for you. "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ." If you are a convinced sinner, he died for you; for he died for sinners. If you can truly say you are a sinner, Christ Jesus hung upon the cross for you. Look at him there, bleeding; every drop of blood says to you, "I drop, poor sinner,

for thee." Look to that gash in his side, whence flows the double stream of water and blood; it says, "Sinner, this stream runs for thee." Art thou a sinner? If so, Christ died for thee. He hath not died in vain: thou shalt be saved. If thou dost but know thyself to be a *bona fide* sinner, a real one, no complimentary sham sinner, but a real, actual one, who means what he says, when he declares himself to be guilty and vile; then, as the Lord liveth, Jesus Christ died for you on Calvary; you shall behold his face with joy; you shall be numbered with the Church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven, and you shall sing eternal hallelujahs round the throne of God and the Lamb.

SERMON XXIX.

THE TABERNACLE OF THE MOST HIGH.

"In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."—Ephesians, ii. 22.

Under the old Mosaic dispensation God had a visible dwelling place among men. The bright shekinah was seen between the wings of the cherubim which overshadowed the mercy-seat; and in the tabernacle while Israel journeyed in the wilderness, and in the temple afterwards, when they were established in their own land, there was a visible manifestation of the presence of Jehovah in the place which was dedicated to his service. Now, every thing under the Mosaic dispensation was but a type, a picture, a symbol of something higher and nobler. That form of worship was, as it were, a series of shadow-pictures, of which the gospel is the substance. It is a sad fact, however, that there is so much Judaism in all our hearts, that we frequently go back to the old beggarly elements of the law, instead of going forward and seeing in them a type of something spiritual and heavenly, to which we ought to aspire. It is disgraceful to the present century to hear some men talk as they do. They had better at once espouse the Jewish creed. I mean it is disgraceful to hear some men speak as they do with regard to religious edifices. I remember to have heard a sermon once upon this text—"If any man defile the temple of God, him will God destroy." And the first part of the sermon was occupied with a childish anathema against all who should dare to perform any unhallowed act in the churchyard, or who should lean the pole of a tent during the fair of the coming week, against any part of that edifice, which, it seemed to me, was the god of the man who occupied the

pulpit. Is there such a thing as a holy place any where? Is there any spot wherein God now particularly dwells? I trow not. Hear ye the words of Jesus, "Believe me, the hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem worship the Father. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him." Remember, again the saying of the apostle at Athens, "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands."

When men talk of holy places they seem to be ignorant of the use of language. Can holiness dwell in bricks and mortar? Can there be such a thing as a sanctified steeple? Can it possibly happen that there can be such a thing in the world as a moral window, or a godly door post? I am lost in amazement, utterly lost, when I think how addled men's brains must be when they impute moral virtues to bricks and mortar, and stones, and stained glass. Pray, how deep doth this consecration go, and how high? Is every crow that flies over the edifice at that time in solemn air? Certainly it is as rational to believe that, as to conceive that every worm that is eating the body of an Episcopalian is a consecrated worm, and therefore there must necessarily be a brick wall, or a wide gravel path to protect the bodies of the sanctified from any unhallowed worms that might creep across from the Dissenters' side of the cemetery. I say again, such child's play, such Popery, such Judaism, is a disgrace to the century. And yet, notwithstanding, we all find ourselves at divers times and seasons indulging in it. That at which you have just now smiled is but pushing the matter a little further, an error into which we may very readily descend; it is but an extravaganza of an error into which we all of us are likely to fall. We have a reverence for our plain chapels; we feel a kind of comfort when we are sitting down in the place which, somehow or other, we have got to think must be holy.

Now let us if we can—and perhaps it takes a great sturdiness and independence of mind to do it—let us drive away once and for ever, all idea of holiness being connected with any thing but with a conscious active agent; let us get rid once and for ever of

all superstitions with regard to place. Depend upon it, one place is as much consecrated as another, and wherever we meet with true hearts reverently to worship God, that place becomes for the time being God's house. Though it be regarded with the most religious awe, that place which has no devout heart within it, is no house of God; it may be a house of superstition, but a house of God it cannot be. "But, still," says one, "God hath a habitation; doth not your text say so?" Yes, and of that house of God I am about to speak this morning. There is such a thing as a house of God; but that is not an inanimate structure, but a living and a spiritual temple. "In whom," that is Christ, "ye also are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit." The house of God is built with the living stones of converted men and women, and the church of God, which Christ hath purchased with his blood—this is the divine edifice, and the structure wherein God dwelleth even to this day. I would, however, make one remark with regard to places in which we worship. I do not think, albeit, that there can be no sanctity of superstition connected with them, there is at the same time, a kind of sacredness of association. In any place where God has blessed my soul, I feel that it is none other than the house of God, and the very gate of heaven. It is not because the stones are hallowed, but because there I have met with God, and the recollections that I have of the place consecrate it to me. That place where Jacob laid him down to sleep, what was it but his sleeping chamber for the time being, but his sleeping chamber was none other than the house of God. Ye have rooms in your houses, I hope, and closets there more sacred in truth than any gorgeous cathedral that ever lifted its spire to heaven. Where we meet with God there is a sacredness, not in the place but in the associations connected with it. Where we hold fellowship with God and where God makes bare his arm, though it be in a barn or a hedgerow, or on a moor, or on a mountain side, there is God's house to us, and the place is consecrated at once, but yet not so consecrated as that we may regard it with superstitious awe, but only consecrated by our own recollections of blessed hours which we have spent there in hallowed fellowship with

God. Leaving that out of the question, I come to introduce you to the house which God has builded for his habitation.

We shall regard the church this morning thus—first, as *a building;* secondly, as *a habitation;* and thirdly, as what she is soon to become, namely—*a glorious temple.*

I. First, then, we shall regard the church as A BUILDING. And here let us pause to ask the question first of all what is a church —what is the church of God? One sect claims the title for itself of *the church*, while other denominations hotly contend for it. It belongs to none of us. The church of God consisteth not of any one peculiar denomination of men; the church of God consisteth of those whose names are written in the book of God's eternal choice; the men who were purchased by Christ upon the tree, the men who are called of God by his Holy Spirit and who, being quickened by that same Spirit, partake of the life of Christ, and become members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. These are to be found in every denomination among all sorts of Christians; some stray ones where we little dreamed of them; here and there a member of the church of God hidden in the midst of the darkness of accursed Rome; now and then, as if by chance, a member of the church of Christ, connected with no sect whatever, far away from all connection with his brethren, having scarcely heard of their existence, yet still knowing Christ, because the life of Christ is in him. Now this church of Christ, the people of God throughout the world, by whatever name they may be known, are in my text compared to a building in which God dwells.

I must now indulge in a little allegory with regard to this building. The church is not a heap of stones shot together; she is a building. Of old her architect devised her. Methinks I see him, as I look back into old eternity, making the first outline of his church. "Here," saith he, in his eternal wisdom, "shall be the corner-stone, and there shall be the pinnacle." I see him ordaining her length, and her breadth, appointing her gates and her doors with matchless skill, devising every part of her, and leaving no single portion of the structure unmapped. I see him, that mighty architect, also choosing to himself every stone of the building, ordaining its size and its shape; settling upon his mighty

plan the position each stone shall occupy, whether it shall glitter in front, or be hidden in the back, or buried in the very centre of the wall. I see him marking not merely the bare outline, but all the fillings up; all being ordained, decreed, and settled, in the eternal covenant, which was the divine plan of the mighty architect upon which the church is to be built. Looking on, I see the architect choosing a corner stone. He looks to heaven, and there are the angels, those glittering stones, he looks at each of them from Gabriel down; but, saith he, "None of you will suffice, I must have a corner stone that will support all the weight of the building, for on that stone every other one must lean. O Gabriel, thou wilt not suffice! Raphael thou must lay by; I cannot build with thee." Yet was it necessary that a stone should be found, and one too that should be taken out of the same quarry as the rest. Where was he to be discovered? Was there a man who would suffice to be the corner stone of this mighty building? Ah, no! neither apostles, prophets, nor teachers would. Put them altogether, and they would be as a foundation of quicksand, and the house would totter to its fall. Mark how the divine mind solved the difficulty—"God shall become man, very man, and so he shall be of the same substance as the other stones of the temple, yet shall he be God, and therefore strong enough to bear all the weight of this mighty structure, the top whereof shall reach to heaven." I see that foundation stone laid. Is there singing at the laying of it? No. There is weeping there. The angels gathered round at the laying of this first stone; and look, ye men, and wonder, the angels weep; the harps of heaven are clothed in sackcloth, and no song is heard. They sang together and shouted for joy when the world was made, why shout they not now? Look ye here and see the reason. That stone is imbedded in blood, that corner stone must lie nowhere else but in its own gore. The vermillion cement drawn from his own sacred veins must imbed it. And there he lies, the first stone of the divine edifice. Oh, begin your songs afresh, ye angels, it is over now. The foundation stone is laid; the terrible ceremony is complete, and now, whence shall we gather the stones to build this temple? The first is laid, where are the rest? Shall we go and dig into the sides of Lebanon? Shall we find these precious

stones in the marble quarries of kings? No. Whither are ye flying, ye laborers of God? Whither are ye going? Where are the quarries? And they reply—"We go to dig in the quarries of Sodom and Gomorrah, in the depths of sinful Jerusalem, and in the midst of erring Samaria." I see them clear away the rubbish. I mark them as they dig deep into the earth, and at last they come to these stones. But how rough, how hard, how unhewn. Yes, but these are the stones ordained of old in the decree, and these must be the stones, and none other. There must be a change effected. These must be brought in and shaped and cut and polished, and put into their places. I see the workmen at their labor. The great saw of the law cuts through the stone, and then comes the polishing chisel of the gospel. I see the stones lying in their places, and the church is rising. The ministers, like wise master-builders, are there running along the wall, putting each spiritual stone in its place; each stone is leaning on that massive corner stone, and every stone depending on the blood, and finding its security and its strength in Jesus Christ, the corner stone, elect, and precious. Do you see the building rise as each one of God's chosen is brought in, called by grace and quickened? Do you mark the living stones as in sacred love and holy brotherhood they are knit together? Have you ever entered the building, and seen how these stones lean one upon another, bearing each other's burden, and so fulfilling the law of Christ? Do you mark how the church loveth Christ, and how the members love each other? How first the church is joined to the corner stone, and then each stone bound to the next, and the next to the next, till the whole building becometh one? Lo! the structure rises, and it is complete, and at last it is built. And now, open wide your eyes, and see what a glorious building this is—the church of God. Men talk of the splendor of their architecture—this is architecture indeed; neither after Grecian nor Gothic models, but after the model of the sanctuary which Moses saw in the holy mountain. Do you see it? Was there ever a structure so comely as this—instinct with life in every part? Upon one stone shall be seven eyes, and each stone full of eyes and full of hearts. Was ever a thought so massive as this—a building built of souls—a structure made of hearts? There is no

house like a heart for one to repose in. There a man may find peace in his fellow-man; but here is the house where God delighteth to dwell—built of living hearts, all beating with holy love —built of redeemed souls, chosen of the Father, bought with the blood of Christ. The top of it is in heaven. Part of them are above the clouds. Many of the living stones are now in the pinnacle of paradise. We are here below, the building rises, the sacred masonry is heaving, and, as the corner stone rises, so all of us must rise until at last the entire structure from its foundation to its pinnacle shall be heaved up to heaven, and there shall it stand for ever—the new Jerusalem—the temple of the majesty of God.

With regard to this building, I have just a remark or two to make before I come to the next point. Whenever architects devise a building, they make mistakes in forming the plan. The most careful will omit something; the most clever find in some things he has been mistaken. But mark the church of God; it is built according to rule, and compass, and square, and it shall be found at last that there has not been one mistake. You, perhaps, my dear brother, are a little stone in the temple, and you are apt to think you ought to have been a great one. There is no mistake about that. You have but one talent; that is enough for you. If you had two, you would spoil the building. You are placed perhaps in a position of obscurity, and you are saying, "Oh that I were prominent in the church!" If you were prominent you might be in a wrong place; and but one stone out of its place in architecture so delicate as that of God, would mar the whole. You are where you ought to be; keep there. Depend on it there is no mistake. When at last we shall go round about her, mark her walls, and tell her bulwarks, we shall each of us be compelled to say, "How glorious is this Zion!" When our eyes shall have been enlightened, and our hearts instructed, each part of the building will command our admiration. The topstone is not the foundation, nor does the foundation stand at the top. Every stone is of the right shape; the whole material is as it should be, and the structure is adapted for the great end, the glory of God, the temple of the Most High. Infinite wisdom then may be remarked in this building of God.

Another thing may be noticed, namely, her impregnable strength This habitation of God, this house which is not made with hands, but is of God's building, has often been attacked, but it has never been taken. What multitudes of enemies have battered against her old ramparts! but they have battered in vain. "The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers took counsel together." Lu what happened? They came against her, every one of them wit. mighty men, each man with his sword drawn, but what became of them? The Almighty scattered kings in Hermon like snow in Salmon. As the snow is driven from the mountain side before the stormy blast, even so didst thou drive them away, O God, and they melted before the breath of thy nostrils.

> "Then should our souls in Zion dwell,
> Nor fear the rage of Rome or hell."

The church is not in danger, and she never can be. Let her enemies come on, she can resist. Her passive majesty, her silent rocky strength, bids them defiance now. Let them come on and break themselves in pieces, let them dash themselves against her, and learn the ready road to their own destruction. She *is* safe, and she must be safe even unto the end. Thus much, then, we can say of the structure: it is built by infinite wisdom, and it is impregnably secure.

And we may add, it is glorious for beauty. There was never structure like this. One might feast his eyes upon it from dawn to eve, and then begin again. Jesus himself takes delight in it. So pleased is God in the architecture of his church, that he has rejoiced with his church as he never did with the world. When God made the world he heaved the mountains, and digged the seas, and covered its valleys with grass; he made all the fowls of the air, and all the beasts of the field; yea, and he made man in his own image, and when the angels saw it they sang together and they shouted for joy. God did not sing; there was no sufficient theme of song for him that was "Holy, holy, holy." He might say it was very good; there was a goodness of fitness about it, but not moral goodness of holiness. But when God built his church he did sing; and that is the most extraordinary passage, I sometimes think, in the whole Word of God, where he

is represented as singing:—"Thy Redeemer in the midst of thee is mighty, he will save, he will rest in his love, he will rejoice over thee with singing." Think, my brethren, of God himself looking at his church: and so fair and beautiful is the structure, that he sings over his work, and as each stone is put in its place, Divinity itself sings. Was ever song like that? Oh, come, let us sing, let us exalt the name of God together; praise him who praiseth his church—who hath made her to be his peculiar dwelling-place.

Thus, then, have we in the first place regarded the church as a building.

II. But the true glory of the church of God consists in the fact that she is not only a building, but that she is A HABITATION. There may be great beauty in an uninhabited structure, but there is always a melancholy thought connected with it. In riding through our country, we often come upon a dismantled tower, or castle; it is beautiful, but it is not a thing of joy; there is a sorrowful reflection connected with it. Who loves to see desolate palaces? Who desireth that the land should cast out her sons, and that her houses should fail of tenants? But there is joy in a house lit up and furnished, where there is the sound of men. Beloved, the church of God hath this for her peculiar glory, that she is a tenanted house, that she is a habitation of God through the Spirit. How many churches there are that are houses, yet not habitations! I might picture to you a professed church of God; it is built according to square and compass, but its model has been formed in some ancient creed, and not in the Word of God. It is precise in its discipline according to its own standard, and accurate in its observances according to its own model. You enter that church, the ceremony is imposing; the whole service perhaps attracts you for a while; but you go out of that place conscious that you have not met with the life of God there—that it is a house, but a house without a tenant. It may be professedly a church, but it is not a church possessing the indwelling of the Holy One; it is an empty house that must soon be dilapidated and fall. I do fear that this is true of many of our churches, Established and Dissenting, as well as Romanist. There are too many churches that are nothing but a mass of dull,

dead formality; there is no life of God there. You might go to worship with such a people, day after day, and your heart would never beat more quickly, your blood would never leap in its veins, your soul would never be refreshed, for it is an empty house. Fair may be the architecture of the structure, but empty is its storehouse; there is no table spread, there is no rejoicing, no killing of the fatted calf, no dancing, no singing for joy. Beloved, et us take heed, lest our churches become the same, lest we be combinations of men without spiritual life, and consequently houses uninhabited, because God is not there. But a true church, that is visited by the Spirit of God, where conversion, instruction, devotion, and the like, are carried on by the Spirit's own living influences—such a church has God for its inhabitant.

And now we will just turn over this sweet thought. A church built of living souls is God's own house. What is meant by this? I reply, a house is a place where a man solaces and comforts himself. Abroad we do battle with the world: there we strain every nerve and sinew that we may stem a sea of troubles, and may not be carried away by the stream. Abroad, among men, we meet those of strange language to us, who often cut us to the heart and wound us to the quick. We feel that there we must be up on our guard. We could often say, "My soul is among lions. I lie even among those that are set on fire of hell." Going abroad in the world we find but little rest, but the day's work done, we go home, and there we solace ourselves. Our weary bodies are refreshed. We throw away the armor that we have been wearing, and we fight no more. We see no longer the strange face, but loving eyes beam upon us. We hear no language now which is discordant in our ears. Love speaks, and we reply. Our home is the place of our solace, our comfort, and our rest. Now, God calls the church his habitation—his *home*. See him abroad; h s hurling the thunderbolt and lifting up his voice upon the waters Hearken to him; his voice breaks the cedars of Lebanon and makes the hinds to calve. See him when he makes war, riding the chariot of his might, he drives the rebellious angels over the battlements of heaven down to the depth of hell. Behold him as he lifteth himself in the majesty of his strength! Who is this that is glorious? It is God, most high and terrible. But see, he

lays aside his glittering sword; his spear he bears no longer. He cometh back to his home. His children are about him. He taketh his solace and his rest. Yes, think not I venture too far —he shall rest in his love! and he doth do it. He resteth in his church. He is no longer a consuming fire, a terror, and a flame. Now is he love, and kindness, and sweetness, ready to hear the prattle of his children's prayer, and the disjointed notes of his children's song. Oh how beautiful is the picture of the church as God's house, the place in which he takes his solace! "For the Lord hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest for ever; here will I dwell; for I have desired it."

Furthermore, a man's home is the place where he shows his inner self. You meet a man at the market, he deals sharply with you; he knows with whom he has to deal, and he acts with you as a man of the world. You see him again at home, talking with his children, and you say, "What a different man! I could not have believed it was the same being." Mark, again, the professor in his chair; he is instructing students in science. Mark his sternness as he speaks upon recondite themes. Would you believe that that same man will in the evening have his little one upon his knee, and will tell it childish tales, and repeat the ballads of the nursery? And yet it is even so. See the king as he rides through the street in his pomp; thousands gather round him; acclamation rends the sky. With what majestic port he bears himself! He is all a king, every inch a monarch, as he towers in the midst of the multitude. Have you seen the king at home? He is then just like other men; his little ones are about him; he is on the floor with them in their games. Is this the king? Yes, it is even he. But why did he not do this in his palace?—in the streets? Oh, no, that was not his home. It is in his home that a man unbends himself. Even so with regard to our glorious God: it is in his church that he manifests himself as he does not unto the world. The mere worldling turns his telescope to the sky, and he sees the pomp of God in the stars, and he says, "O God, how infinite art thou?" Devoutly he looks across the sea, and beholds it lashed with tempest, and he says, "Behold the might and majesty of the Deity!" The anatomist dissects an

nsect, and discovers in every part of it divine wisdom, and he says, "How wise is God!" Ay; but it is only the believer who as he kneels in his chamber can say, "My father made all these," and then can say, "Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name." There are sweet revelations which God makes in his church, which he never makes anywhere else. It is there he takes the children to his bosom; it is there he opens his heart, and lets his people know the fountains of his great soul, and the might of his infinite affection. And is it not a sweet thing to think of God at home with his family, happy in the house of his church?

But yet, furthermore, another thought strikes me now. A man's home is the centre of all he doth. Yonder is a large farm. Well, there are outhouses and hay ricks, and barns, and the like; but just in the middle of these there is the house, the centre of all husbandry. No matter how much wheat there may be, it is to the house the produce goes. It is for the maintenance of the household that the husband carries on his husbandry. You may hear the cattle lowing yonder, you may mark the sheep upon the hills, but the fleece cometh home, and the full udders must yield the milk for the children of the house, for the house is the centre of all. Every river of industry cometh down towards the sweet, soft inland lake of home. Now, God's Church is God's centre! He is abroad in the world, he is busy here and there and every where; but to what does all his business tend? To his Church. Why doth God clothe the hills with plenty? *For the feeding of his people?* Why is providence revolving? Why those wars and tempests, and then again this stillness and calm? *It is for his church.* Not an angel divides the ether who hath not a mission for the church. It may be indirectly, but neverthe ess truly so. There is not an archangel that fulfils the behests of the Most High but really carries the church upon his broad wings, and bears up her children lest they dash their feet against a stone. The storehouses of God are for his church. The depths beneath of hidden treasure, of God's unutterable riches—all these are for his people. There is nothing which he hath, from his blazing crown to the darkness that is beneath his throne, that is not for his redeemed. All things must minister and work together for good for the chosen church of God which is his *house*—his daily

habitation. I think if you will turn that over and over again, when you are away, you will see there is much in the beautiful fact, that as the house is the centre, so is the church the centre of every thing with God.

One other thought and I will have done. We have heard much talk of late about the French invasion. I shall begin to be alarmed bout it when I see it, but certainly not till then. However, there s one thing we may say pretty safely. We are many of us peace men and would not like to wield the sword; the first sight of blood would sicken us; we are peaceful beings, we are not for fighting and war. But let the most peaceful man imagine that the invader has landed on our shore, that our houses be in danger, and our homes about to be sacked by the foe, our conscientiousness I fear would give way; notwithstanding all we might say about the wrongness of war, I query whether there be a man among us who would not take such weapon as he could find next to hand to repel the enemy. With this for our war-cry, "Our hearths and our homes," we would rush upon the invader, be he who he may or what he may. There is no might so tremendous that it could paralyze our arm; until we were frozen in death we would fight for our home; there would be no command so stern that it could quiet us; we should break through every band and bond, and the weakest of us would be a giant, and our women would become heroines in the day of difficulty. Every hand would find its weapon to hurl at the invader. We love our homes, and we must and will defend them. Ay, and now lift up your thoughts—the church is God's home, will he not defend it? will he suffer his own house to be sacked and stormed? shall the hearth of divinity be stained with the blood of his children? Shall it be that the church is overthrown, and her battlements stormed, her peaceful habitations given up to fire and sword? No, never, not while God hath a heart of love, and while he calleth his people his own house and his habitation. Come, let us rejoice in this our security; let earth be all in arms abroad, we dwell in perfect peace for our Father is in the house and he is God Almighty. Let them come on against us, we need not fear, his arm shall fell them, the breath of his nostrils shall blast them, a word shall destroy them, they shall melt away like the fat of rams, as fat of

lambs shall they be consumed, into smoke shall they consume away. All these thoughts seem to me naturally to arise from the fact that the church is God's habitation.

III. I was about to show you in the third place, that the church is, bye-and-bye, to be GOD'S GLORIOUS TEMPLE. It doth not yet appear what *she* shall be. I have, however, already mentioned this precious fact. The church is rising to-day, and she shall continue to rise until the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established upon the top of the mountains, and then when all nations shall call her blessed, and him blessed too—when they shall all say, "Come, and let us go up to the house of our God that we may worship him," then shall the church's glory begin. When this earth shall pass away, when all the monuments of empires shall be dissolved and run down in the common lava of the last burning, then shall the church be caught up in the clouds and afterwards be exalted to heaven itself, to become a temple such as eye hath not seen.

And now, brethren and sisters, in conclusion I make these remarks. If the church of God is God's house, what should you and I do? Why, we should earnestly seek, as being a part of that temple, always to retain the great inhabitant. Let us not grieve his Spirit, lest he leave his church for awhile; above all, let us not be hypocrites, lest he never come into our hearts at all. And if the church be God's temple and God's house, let us not defile it. If you defile yourself you defile the church, for your sin, if you be a church member, is the church's sin. The defilement of one stone in a building virtually mars its perfection. Take care that thou be holy even as he is holy. Let not thine heart become a house for Belial. Think not that God and the devil can dwell in the same habitation. Give thyself wholly to God. Seek for more of his Spirit, that as a living stone thou mayest be wholly consecrated; and never be content unless thou feelest in thyself the perpetual presence of the divine inhabitant who dwelleth in his church. May God now bless every living stone of the temple. And as for you that as yet are not hewn out of the quarries of sin, I pray that divine grace may meet with you, that you may be renewed and converted, and at last be partakers of the inheritance of the saints of light.

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